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## Project Paper 3

# Early School Leaving in the European Union: Data Availability and Reporting

Final Version, 2014-03-12

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## Introduction

The RESL.eu project investigates the factors influencing the mechanisms and processes related to Early School Leaving (ESL)<sup>1</sup>. It aims to provide insights into young people's decisions to leave school early, with a particular focus on the vulnerable group of early school leavers identified as not in employment, education or training (NEET) (see PP2 for theoretical outline). The project involves a substantial amount of primary data collection in seven countries<sup>2</sup> to generate current and comparable cross-national statistical information from which key trends and insights into ESL in the EU can be highlighted. In order to inform this empirical dimension of the project, it is first necessary to assess the extent to which data currently exist on a variety of education issues and where there is a lack of sufficient comparable data.

The aims of this Project Paper are twofold: firstly, the paper reviews and outlines the available statistical evidence relating to ESL in the European Union, within individual member states and on a regional level. There is a particular focus on data pertaining to each of the seven countries involved in the primary collection of data within the RESL.eu project.

Secondly, the paper analyses thematically the overall trends revealed by the available data. Beyond a focus on ESL as a phenomenon in itself, the RESL.eu project also takes into account and examines other key concepts and issues relating to young people's educational trajectories. In this way, key gaps in statistical data can be identified and used to inform the design and development of research instruments for primary data collection.

As stated in RESL.eu Project Paper 2 (page 1), ESL can be seen as the “end-result of a process already starting early on in life, but also a phenomenon that to some extent transcends the level of the individual”. For this reason, it is important to examine not only the outcomes of young people's attainment but also the risk and protective factors that influence their aspirations, decision making and self-concept throughout their school careers. Such factors are also helpful in providing insights into why some early school leavers return to education whilst others do not.

The paper begins with a review of the availability of data on education issues (e.g. attainment, qualifications, labour market status, attitudes to education, etc) in international, EU, national and regional datasets; followed by an analysis of comparative European and national-specific data on these issues. It will conclude with an evaluation of the extent to which the available data can provide a comparative basis for the cross-national analysis of ESL and the diversity of issues surrounding educational trajectories and under-qualification.

<sup>1</sup> At EU level, the concept of Early School Leaving (ESL) refers to young people aged between 18 and 24, who have attained no higher than lower secondary education and who are not currently receiving any education or training. See; Eurostat. (2013) 'Early Leaver from Education and Training' Statistics Explained; available online at: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Glossary:Early\\_school\\_leaver](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Glossary:Early_school_leaver).

<sup>2</sup> The seven RESL.eu partner countries involved in primary data collection are: Belgium, United Kingdom, Sweden, Portugal, Netherlands, Poland and Spain. Data are also presented in this paper on the projects other two partner countries: Austria and Hungary.

# 1. Availability of Data on Education Issues

## 1.1 International and European Union level

Education data are standardised at the international level by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (UIS); the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); and Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.

The UIS collects and manages cross-national statistical data from across the United Nations, working with national statistical agencies to enhance data collection methodologies and improve the comparability of international data. The UIS produces data on a range of themes that fall within the remit of UNESCO, including education. In addition to producing globally comparable reports, such as the *Global Education Digest*, the institute also develops new indicators to monitor emerging issues in education policymaking. Amongst these are a focus on educational finance, levels of teaching staff, enrolment rates and school life expectancy. Although useful in their own right - because of differences in the methodologies, sources and definitions used - there is a limit to the comparability of these indicators with the data collected by Eurostat. It is for this reason that datasets from the latter agency have been prioritised in this paper.

As part of this work, UNESCO has developed an International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) that is used widely as a means of comparing national education systems that differ in both structure and curriculum content. The most widespread iteration of this classification, ISCED-97<sup>3</sup>, allows for educational levels to be distinguished between pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and tertiary (first and second stages). Additionally, levels of education can be compared in terms of programme orientation (general, vocational or technical), course duration and programme 'destination' (i.e. whether this course allows the participant to accede to a higher level of education).

International data on education are collected and managed by UNESCO jointly with the statistics agencies of the OECD and the European Union. The resultant UOE (UNESCO/OECD/EU) education database contains cross-national statistical data on educational enrolment, graduates, educational finance, class sizes and teaching personnel, as well as using the ISCED framework to map specific education systems.

Additionally, the OECD undertakes a triennial international survey – the **Programme for International Student Assessment** (PISA) – which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students in more than 60 major economies. This empirical data collection has the advantage of being able to measure the knowledge and skills of young people currently within the education system in each country. Each round focuses on one of the principal curriculum areas of literacy, numeracy or science. In addition, a raft of background indicators and psychometric elements in the PISA questionnaires further allows for detailed analy-

<sup>3</sup> A more recent version, ISCED-11, has been devised but has yet to be fully adopted as the standard in international data collection.



sis of educational trajectories, structural causes of educational inequality and the effect of public policy initiatives in education. The questionnaire is also a valuable source of current students' attitudes to school, plans and aspirations.

On a European-wide level, Eurostat coordinates and publishes statistical data collected by EU member states, Candidate Countries and neighbouring EFTA countries. Eurostat's major role is to compile and harmonise these data to allow for effective comparability of statistical information across the various European systems.

As part of this work, the extensive **EU Labour force survey** (EU-LFS) provides comparative data on labour market indicators, including educational attainment, economic activity and socio-demographic information. The LFS is the largest European household sample survey, conducted on a quarterly basis covering more than 1.5 million people. Time series data from the LFS reaches back to the early 1980s and, as such, is one of the longest-standing sources of internationally comparable data.

In addition to the quarterly survey, ad-hoc modules are also conducted on an annual basis. Most relevantly for the present study, these modules have included topics such as 'Transition from School to Working Life' (2000) and 'Entry of Young People into the Labour Market' (2009). Additional variables collected through these ad-hoc modules include highest level of vocational education, work experience during formal studies, job seeking methods and details of first employment following completion of studies.

Data from the EU LFS are disseminated by Eurostat and provide official statistics for the monitoring of the Europe 2020 headline indicators on Tertiary Educational Attainment and Early Leavers from Education and Training.

Further statistics on living conditions, household income levels and social exclusion are also coordinated across the EU by the **Statistics on Income and Living Conditions** (EU-SILC) survey, which provides comparative information for policy monitoring purposes in these areas. Since 2003 this annual household survey has been a key source of statistical data on income distributions and living standards across Europe and it provides both cross-sectional and longitudinal information allowing for analysis of individual changes over time. Amongst the key variables collected through the SILC survey are current educational status and highest level of education attained, health status, labour market activity and current income level. Specific indicators of material deprivation, such as loan arrears, ownership of certain 'luxury' items and basic housing conditions are also collected as primary variables. Similarly to the LFS, ad-hoc modules are included periodically as part of the SILC survey; the most relevant for the present study have focused on the 'Intergenerational Transmission of Disadvantage' (2011) and 'Social Participation' (2006).

Beyond the Eurostat coordination framework, cross-national data are also available from the **European Social Survey**, a biannual cross-sectional survey that takes place in 28 European countries (both EU and non-EU members) and is managed by Norwegian Social Science Data Services. Using a large sample representative of the adult resident population, the ESS produces comparable cross-national data on social conditions and attitudes, and particularly on educational attainment, labour market status and background socio-demographic indicators. Whilst employing a more detailed version of the standard ISCED classification for educational attainment, the ESS is

also a valuable source of attitudinal data, particularly with regards to political trust, social participation and subjective well-being. Important social capital indicators, such as social trust, frequency of seeing friends and religious participation also provide key cross-national comparable data.

Similarly the **European Values Survey**, which began in 1981, is an on-going research project into the values, attitudes and opinions of European population. The study is longitudinal in nature although subsequent waves have included a greater number of participants from more European countries and now represents data from 47 nations in total. The EVS covers a range of social issues, including attitudes to work, family and social networks and capital with demographic information allowing for analysis of respondents over a long time period. As with the ESS, there is a focus on attitudinal data and EVS variables include social capital indicators such as subjective well-being, social participation, frequency of voluntary work, overall neighbourhood satisfaction and social trust.

The **Eurobarometer** series of longitudinal surveys is carried out twice a year in all EU member states, Candidate Countries and EFTA states. It provides information on the attitudes and opinions of the European populace. Originally focused on attitudes towards the EU and the single market, the series has expanded to include cross-national attitudinal data on topics as diverse as environment, technology, health issues, family issues and social or ethnic exclusion. Time series data from the Eurobarometer survey goes as far back as 1974 and uses a large sample size (more than 1,000 people per country) to produce a representative picture of prevalent attitudes and opinions on the EU, its institutions and the major policy issues.

All the surveys mentioned here collect basic demographic data on respondents' age and sex, as well as key socio-economic information regarding nationality, country of birth and labour market status. Of particular interest to studies on educational trajectories, educational attainment is also a universally-collected variable, although the effectiveness of international standardisation of national qualifications and educational 'levels' is still heavily debated in the literature on comparative education statistics (see Schneider, 2008<sup>4</sup>).

None of these general surveys is focused specifically on young people and labour force surveys are explicitly designed to capture information from the working-age population only. For this reason it is often not possible to collect data on respondents' family background, parents' educational levels or other variables, shown in the literature to have a strong predictive effect on someone's propensity to become an early school leaver. One exception to this are the ad hoc modules of the EU LFS on Transition from School to Working Life (2000) and Entry of Young People into the Labour Market (2009); they collect information on, for example, vocational education, work experience during formal studies and job seeking strategies. The European Social Survey also asks respondents about their parents' educational level and labour market status 'when you were [aged] 14'<sup>5</sup>. However, none of the surveys reviewed here collects extensive background information such that a clear insight into young people's access to social and cultural capital might be established as a way of quantitatively measuring the causes and predictors of ESL.

<sup>4</sup> Schneider, S.L. (Ed.). (2008). The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-97). An evaluation of content and criterion validity for 15 European countries. Mannheim: MZES

<sup>5</sup> European Social Survey, (2010). ESS Round 5 Source Questionnaire. London: Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University London

## 1.2 National level

In order to develop a coherent strategy for the collection of new empirical data, the quantitative part of the RESL.eu project is, in the first instance, concerned with the collection and analysis of existing statistical data relating to early school leaving in the EU and particularly in the partner countries. To this end, each of the countries' teams<sup>6</sup> was asked systematically to collect and assess what datasets are available at a national (and/or regional or local) level that could be useful as a source of statistical information on students, school leavers and young people, including those not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

For each of the partner countries, the datasets included current official statistics, governmental databases and national school registries. Beyond this, any datasets containing relevant variables were included, not just those explicitly dealing with student or education information. Examples included cohort studies, school-leavers surveys, national labour force surveys and censuses. In order to have as complete a picture as possible of the existing data in each country, it was also asked that previous quantitative research be taken into account and, where available, information on local studies, one-off surveys and independent research is included in the review.

Based on the data sources cited by the national teams, a selection of data outputs was provided to illustrate the key findings that emerge from the statistics. These were used to form an outline of the prevalent conditions in each participant country on identified 'topics', such as early school leaving, educational attainment, youth unemployment and young NEETs.

Although not a comprehensive review of data source, this exercise did nevertheless provide a clear idea of gaps that existed in the currently available quantitative datasets, and could then inform the design and development of instruments for the collection of new empirical data in the next phase of the project.

### 1.2.1 Datasets

The national teams each sought to enumerate the major sources of official statistics and quantitative datasets, looking specifically at what types of datasets are available (see table 1), who produces them, how frequently and how recent the current data is. The sample size also provided an indicator of how representative a dataset is and how useful it could be in providing reliable statistical data relating to its target population. For datasets regarding educational issues it is also important to note who the target population of the dataset is, i.e. which age range or academic years they cover.

The outcome of these national reviews of data sources revealed the principal key datasets – both official statistics and academic datasets – although time and resource constraints prevented them from being comprehensive. However, this exercise has provided a base from which to explore what data were collected in each country and where gaps existed in readily-available comparable statistical data. A full catalogue of the data sources referenced as part of these reviews is provided in Appendix 2, with web links where available.

<sup>6</sup> BE-nl: Belgium (with a particular focus on Flanders); UK: United Kingdom; SE: Sweden; PT: Portugal; NL: Netherlands; PL: Poland; ES: Spain

**Table 1 – Referenced data sources by type of dataset**

	BE-nl	UK	SE	PT	NL	PL	ES
Census	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
Cross-sectional surveys	1	2	3	1	4	1	6
Longitudinal/panel studies	3	4	0	4	1	6	6
Cohort studies	0	4	0	1	2	0	0
National pupil register/database	3	2	1	1	1	2	0
<b>Total number of data sources:</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>

## Flanders (Belgium)

In Belgium, education is a ‘Community’ competence and data are therefore related to a specific Community, viz.: Flemish, French and German-speaking. Within the RESL.eu project, the Belgian team, based in Antwerp, focus in particular on the educational context that exists within the Flemish Community (co-terminus with the Flanders Region). Although in Flanders rich datasets on early school leaving and related topics are available, some specific blind spots remain, e.g. the influence of social networks, outside school experiences or factors relating to learning environments. Most datasets are administered and analysed by the Flemish Department for Education and the associated policy research centres financed by this same government agency: the Policy Research Centre for Educational and School Careers (*Steunpunt SSL*), formerly known as the Policy Research Centre for Careers from Education to Labour Market (*Steunpunt LOA*).

In addition to data analysis based on surveys and administrative data by the Policy Research Centres SSL and LOA, the Flemish Agency for Employment (VDAB) maintains a specific School Leavers Database and there also exists large-scale academic research, such as the BETYOU! Project that focuses on the school careers of pupils with an immigrant background in the urban areas of Antwerp, Ghent and Genk.

## United Kingdom

In addition to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), which is aggregated annually as the Annual Population Survey (APS), the Office for National Statistics is charged with carrying out the decennial census and maintaining data produced on behalf of the various government departments in the UK.

Major cohort studies have been carried out in the UK to track the life trajectories of successive generations of British-born people (e.g. National Child Development Study; British Cohort Study; Millennium Cohort Study) and there are also on-going longitudinal studies specifically aimed at following young people as they progress from school to work, commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) (the Youth Cohort Study and the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England).

The DfE also maintains the National Pupil Database, containing administrative data on all pupils in compulsory education in England. As well as being a useful data source in its own right, this also allows data in other studies to be ‘matched’ with the database to elicit further key findings. A similar database – the Individualised Learner Register – also exists, containing administrative data on all students currently undertaking Further Education in England.

Academic research in the UK on young people and educational trajectories is abundant and a useful source of both qualitative and quantitative data on young people's lives – although the use of the specific concept of ESL is extremely limited. Prominent examples, relevant to the present study, include the Young People's Social Attitudes (YPSA) survey, the Institute of Education's Effective Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education (EPPSE) study and the Families and Children Study (FACS).

## **Sweden**

In Sweden, the topic of early school leaving has not been the subject of much public or academic research and consequently there exists little available data on the issue or even, more broadly, on young people's educational trajectories. One exception to this is the Statistics Sweden 2007 study, entitled 'Young people without completed secondary education' (*'Ungdomar utan fullföljd gymnasieutbildning'*). This study sought to assess the reasons why young people leave school without a diploma as well as seeking to evaluate participants' current circumstances, plans for the future and potential ways of preventing their dropping out. However, the study had a relatively low response rate, thus caution is required in making generalisations upon its findings.

Statistics Sweden also collaborates with the Social Insurance Agency and the Swedish Agency for Innovative Systems in the construction and maintenance of the Longitudinal Integration Database for Health Insurance and Labour Market Studies (LISA database). The database gives a basis for longitudinal statistics and research about entire populations or groups therein and about labour relations, employment and alternative activity statuses (e.g. studies, parental leave, unemployment, labour market activities, etc.) as well as illness and health issues.

In terms of academic research, two key surveys have been undertaken with a focus on young people and their educational attainment. The cross-national *TIES*-survey looked at integration of 'second-generation immigrants' in schools across a number of urban settings; the *LiU 9 årskurs* study examines the effect of social capital on the educational performance of young people from different backgrounds and is still in its analysis phase.

## **Portugal**

There are very few official datasets in Portugal that are focused on young people at school. The Office of Education Statistics and Planning (Gabinete de Estatística e Planeamento da Educação; GEPE) collects statistics on enrolment figures and attainment rates on an annual basis, as well as information on schools and educational institutions. Moreover there exists research centres that collect data from small scale questionnaires developed in schools (OBVIE), or more broadly collect data on young people education, training and ESL and other indicators of youth life (OPJ, Youth Permanent Observatory). The Family Observatory also undertakes relevant research into, and produces quantitative data on, the dynamics of family life and the effect this has on young people.

More detailed statistical data on educational themes are collected by the National Statistics Institute (Instituto Nacional de Estatística; INE) through the national census, the national employment survey and the labour force survey. In regards to early school leaving as a topic on the EU agenda, there is frequent recourse to Eurostat statistics in this area (as aggregated from the Portuguese labour force survey).

Academic studies that look at the topic of school leavers, youth unemployment and educational attainment cite national labour force surveys or the census, with a focus on working age populations. There has been a limited amount of focused original empirical research into the current student population and attitudinal aspects of schools and learning environments.

## **Netherlands**

Within the Netherlands, there exist much available data on school trajectories and early school leaving in particular. The Dutch government attaches great importance to the registration and monitoring of early school leavers. There are several registration systems at different levels (national register, regional registers and local registers), providing information about enrolment and truancy of students, although it is not always clear how each system relates to another.

Until 2005, numbers of early school leavers were provided by registers maintained by Registration and Coordination Regions (RMCs). However, since 2005, the primary registration system – the Basic Registry Education (BRON) – occurs on a national level, and is maintained by DUO (*Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs*), a body commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science (OC&W). The new registration system enables the identification of individuals and so makes it possible to follow students through their entire educational careers.

In addition to the official registers several academic institutions and non-governmental organisations in the field of (vocational) education have also produced relevant datasets. The largest datasets are the cohort studies of VOCL (followed up by COOL) which are produced by the University of Groningen and maintained by Statistics Netherlands (CBS).

Another very important dataset is the annual ESL monitor of the Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA). The sample of the ESL monitor is selected from the BRON register. The Centre for Expertise in Vocational Education and Training (ECBO) conducts research about returnees to education in collaboration with DUO, using information from the BRON register about enrolment, drop-out and return.

## **Poland**

In Poland, there are very few data sources relating to levels of early school leaving or educational inactivity. Most current data are taken from the 2011 National Census, disseminated through the Central Statistical Office (CSO) database. Reports created on the basis of the database present the characteristics of the Polish population aged 15 years and over, in terms of socio-demographic and labour market indicators, although variables concerning educational status and non-participation are not currently included.

In fact, there does not appear to be any publicly available dataset that aggregates the key variables relating to education and, in particular, on specific dimensions of education (professional training, informal education etc.) because those different aspects fall within the remit of separate, distinct authorities. Bringing all these data together would be very helpful but has time and resource implications and is only partially achieved by the Educational Research Institute's annual 'Report on the State of Education'.



Datasets collected as part of various scientific projects (e.g. Social diagnosis, POLPAN, Polish General Social Surveys) have been produced on similar topics and contain essentially the same variables. They differ, of course, in methodology and sampling but there again appear to be somewhat of a dearth of original data on education beyond what is already available as official statistics.

## **Spain**

In Spain several databases can be identified, relating to state institutions, state-financed research organisations and also to non-governmental organisations. Datasets maintained by the National Institute of Statistics (INE) comprise official statistics and often serve as a contextualising element, although in certain topics available data are sufficiently deep and disaggregated to be used as primary pieces of information. The most important dataset, or sets of sub-samples, is the Economically Active Population Survey (EAPS), which produces thematic modules on an annual basis. Particularly relevant to the present study, is, for example, the ad hoc module on Youth Entry into the Job Market undertaken in 2009.

In addition to the national official statistics, major research centres, such as the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS) and the Economic and Social Council (CES) produces public and freely available social surveys and thematic reports. In particular, a 2007 CIS survey on 'Homes of the Roma Population' represents the only official database to be produced relating specifically to this minority group (although Roma NGOs, such as the *Fundación Secretariado Gitano* also produce data on the Roma minority focusing on their educational and labour market integration).

### 1.2.2 Variables

In addition to the enumeration of the number of relevant sources available to researchers in each of the countries, an overview of the types of variable included in the datasets was also sought as part of the preliminary review of what quantitative information is already being collected by national statistical agencies, research centres and academic departments. Each country was requested to state which variables within a standard list (categorised into Demographic, Background, Educational, Economic and Attitudinal groupings) were collected by each of the referenced sources. A selection of variables from each grouping and their prevalence amongst the cited data sources in each of the countries is presented in Table 2 below.

Most or all of the data sources cited by the countries contained standard demographic information on sex, age/date of birth and household composition. They also collected data on current educational status and level and type of highest qualification achieved.

Some sources collected information on parent's level of education, occupation and economic activity (or, more rarely, parent's level of income and country of birth), although this depended on who was the main focus of the survey – surveys of the general population were less likely to ask questions on respondents' parents' situation than those specifically aimed at collecting information from children and young people.

Very few of the data sources collected information explicitly asking about the respondent's social class or, in terms of educational information, enquired in detail about the grade at which the respondent passed their highest level of qualification (the exception to this being Portugal).

In the Netherlands, most of the data sources enquired whether the respondent had dropped out of compulsory schooling. This was also asked in at least some of the surveys reviewed in Spain and Flanders (Belgium). However, in Poland and the UK this question did not appear at all in any of the referenced sources, indicating either that dropping out of compulsory schooling not considered a major issue within these systems or that the point at which leaving school 'early' (i.e. without the minimum educational level) becomes an issue postdates the end of compulsory education.

Likewise, most of the countries had surveys that asked how old respondents were when they left school, with the exception of Poland and all but one of the Portuguese sources. In educational systems that allow for grade repetition or with different 'tracks' of varying lengths, this indicator could provide an insight into individuals' educational trajectory, whether they had to take a year several times or if they left school without completing a course.

Looking beyond discrete socio-demographic measures there appears to be a high level of variability in terms of attitudinal variables and more subjective measures of well-being, satisfaction and aspirations collected through quantitative surveys in the different countries.

All countries, however, did reference at least one survey that sought to elicit data on respondents' behaviours/motivations. Of these, attitudes to school were the most frequently sought variable (although it is possible to collect and 'measure' this concept in different ways in different countries and by different surveys). Surveys with a focus on young people at and around the school-leaving age also sought to elicit information about their future plans, subjective well-being and/or social networks (friendship groups, family support, etc.)



Family attitudes to school and parental involvement were collected in some of the surveys in the UK, Flanders (Belgium), Netherlands and Spain, although in Poland no cited sources provided data on these variables, either due to the nature of the survey (e.g. general population survey) or the lack of reliable information on such variables (e.g. administered only to the young person).

**Table 2 – Prevalence of selected variables in referenced data sources**

	BE-nl	UK	SE	PT	NL	PL	ES
<b># data sources referenced:</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Demographic variables</b>							
Sex	7	12	4	4	8	9	11
Age or DoB	7	12	4	4	8	8	10
Household composition	4	10	2	2	5	6	4
<b>Background variables</b>							
Parents' country of birth	4	2	4	1	3	1	1
Parents' economic activity	5	7	3	1	3	4	1
Parents' occupation	4	7	3	1	2	4	1
Parents' level of education	5	5	2	1	4	6	7
Parents' income	3	4	1	1	0	2	1
<b>Educational variables</b>							
Educational status	7	12	4	3	8	9	8
Type of educational institution (e.g. General, academic, vocational)	6	7	4	2	8	8	8
Highest level of educational programme begun	5	6	4	4	2	4	7
Type of highest level of educational programme begun	5	6	4	4	2	4	5
Highest level of qualification achieved	7	11	4	4	3	7	10
Type of highest level of qualification achieved	5	11	4	4	3	6	6
Grade of highest level of qualification achieved	5	3	4	4	0	0	7
Age at school leaving	3	4	4	1	7	0	6
Whether dropped out of compulsory schooling	4	0	-	-	7	0	4
<b>Attitudinal variables</b>							
Attitudes to school	3	7	2	1	5	2	4
Family attitudes to school	4	4	2	1	1	1	3
Parental involvement in school	3	3	2	3	4	0	3
Future plans	4	6	2	1	3	1	2
Social networks/Social capital	2	5	1	1	3	3	1
Psychological well-being	4	4	-	-	3	4	1

The collection of attitudinal variables in large-scale quantitative studies in the partner countries is somewhat sporadic. Some teams did make reference to academic studies that were focused specifically on young people's school and learning experiences. However, more general official statistics linked to labour market or social conditions of the population as a whole tend to include only factual indicators relating to educational attainment, current student status or age at school leaving.

The OECD's PISA programme attempts to collect a more complete picture of students' ability and attitudes in cross-national perspective. However, the project surveys young people who are still at school and cannot, therefore, show to what extent these indicators predict or impact on decisions to leave school early.

Table 2 gives an indication of the level to which attitudes to school are collected by official statistical agencies and through major academic quantitative studies. Although there is some data collected in the UK, Netherlands and Flanders (Belgium), in other countries collection of such variables is not commonly the case. The survey created for the RESL.eu project, therefore, has focused on attitudes of young people not only to the school and learning environment in which they are situated, but also their own attitudes to learning, the importance of education and their perceived academic performance, which in conjunction with socio-economic variables can elicit a broader overall picture of students and how they form their decisions to continue their studies or to leave school early, and thus provide new comparable data from member states across the EU.

As a result, attitudes to school and learning of young people have been identified as an area where there appears to be a lack of sufficient comparable data, particularly amongst young early school leavers. Hence, this has been highlighted as a key consideration in the design of research instruments for the data collection phase of the RESL.eu project.

## 2. Educational Indicators for Young People

This section presents data on key educational indicators for young people resulting from analysis of Eurostat datasets as well as national and regional data sources identified by the seven RESL.eu partner countries. It looks not only at Early School Leaving, as defined by the EU, but also at educational attainment, attitudes to school and learning, future plans and aspirations, youth unemployment, non-participation in education, employment or training (NEET) and reasons young people give for leaving education prematurely and/or under-qualified.

### 2.1 Early School Leaving

#### 2.1.1 European Union data

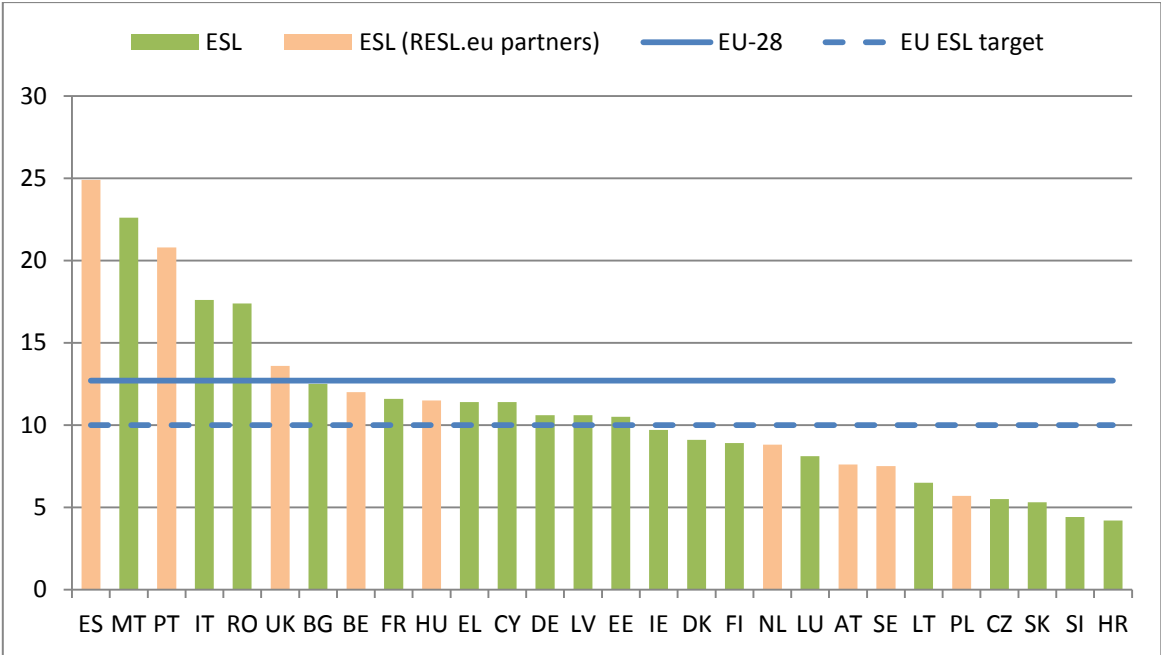
Early School Leaving (ESL), as defined by the EU, refers to young people aged between 18 and 24, who have attained no higher than lower secondary education and who are not currently receiving any education or training. Low levels of education have severe consequences for the young people involved, but are also associated with high societal and economic costs. The EU Labour Force Survey (LFS) is the source of official data used to measure current levels of ESL across Europe and is key to providing the benchmark for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon Agenda target of a rate of ESL at or below 10% by 2020. The relevant variables used in the construction of ESL being respondents' age (between 18 and 24); their highest level of education (lower than the equivalent of ISCED level 3); and their current student status (not having participated in training or education in the 4 weeks prior to the survey).

Although variables on age and level of education are collected as standard in most international surveys, the precise definition used by the EU LFS for current student status can prove problematic when seeking clear comparable data on early school leavers. The LFS definition itself concerns participation in training or education within the previous 4 weeks, although this covers a broad range of possibilities, including short courses and one-off training programmes, as well as more structured studies towards recognised qualifications and, ultimately, to an increase in the respondent's 'level of education'. For this reason, the official Eurostat measure of ESL as constructed using the LFS is likely to be smaller than equivalent measures using surveys relying on student enrolment figures or self-reported current activity status (e.g. European Social Survey).

Rates of ESL and targets at EU and national level pertain to the data collected and disseminated by the EU LFS. This reliable and comparative dataset enables us not only to see the extent to which ESL is a problem in a cross-national perspective (figure 1; map 1), but also to examine key trends in the phenomenon over time (table 4) and by gender (table 5), and even to analyse the youth population in terms of level of education, labour market status and current participation in study or training (figure 2). As can be seen in Figure 1, current national rates of ESL vary greatly between EU member states and these national averages also belie significant regional variations (for example, between French-speaking Wallonia and Dutch-speaking Flanders in Belgium). Whilst the current EU average is at 12.8%, countries such as Spain (ES), Malta (MT) and Portugal (PT)

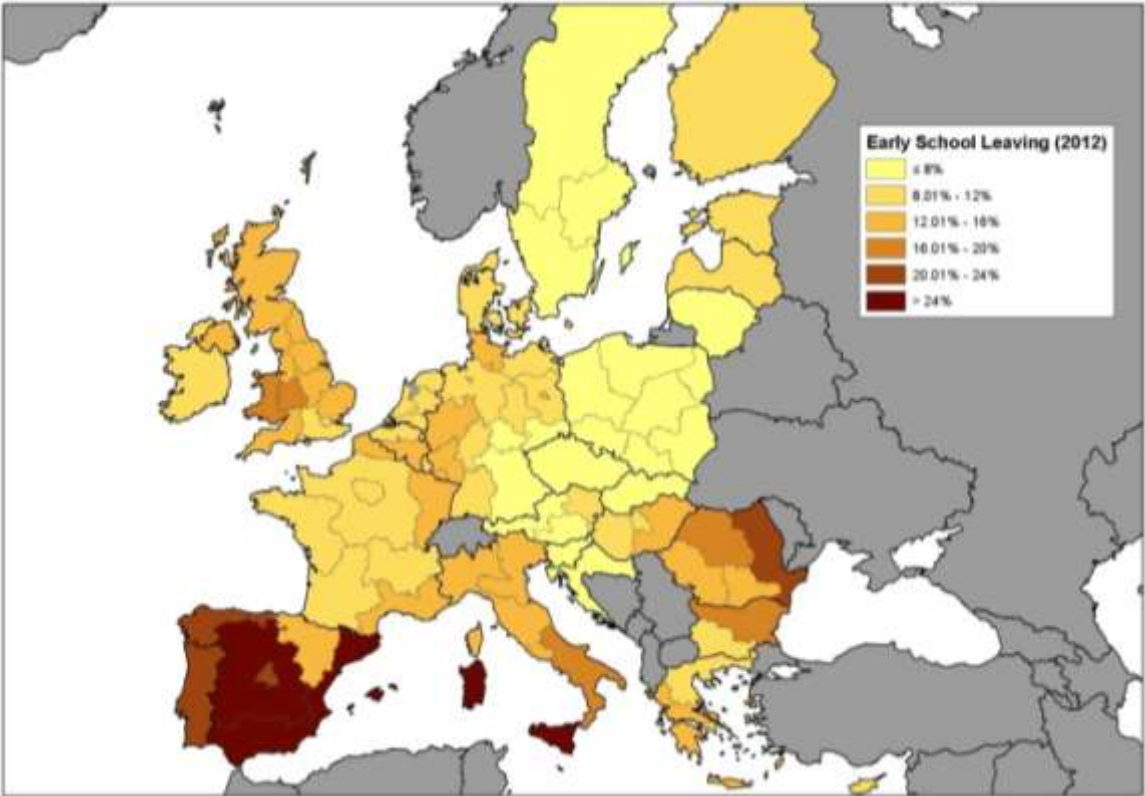
are experiencing ESL rates above 20%, while, at the other end of the spectrum, Croatia (HR) and Slovenia (SI) have less than 5% of young people defined as early school leavers.

**Figure 1 – Rates of Early School Leaving in the EU (% national averages, 2012)**



Source: Eurostat, 2012 [edat\_lfse\_14]

**Map 1 – Early School Leaving rates in NUTS-1\* regions**



Source: Eurostat, 2012 [edat\_lfse\_14]

Note: The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics – or NUTS - is a standard geographical classification used at EU level for statistical purposes. NUTS1 corresponds to the top administrative level.

The partners for the RESL.eu project were chosen as they displayed a broad range of national rates of ESL – Portugal and Spain, as previously, noted experiencing the highest rates in the EU; whilst Poland and Austria were already, in 2009, below the Europe 2020 target of 10%. As shown in Table 3, the overall downward trend between 2009 and 2012 seen across the EU also belies the fact that in some countries (Poland, Belgium, Spain) there has actually been an increase in the ESL rate. Other member states, most notably Sweden and Portugal has made significant strides towards reducing their levels of ESL, exceeding the average EU decrease by two or three times.

Eurostat figures for 2012 show that four of the RESL.eu partners (Poland, Austria, Sweden, the Netherlands) currently have ESL rates below the Europe 2020 target figure of 10%; a further three (Belgium, Hungary, the United Kingdom) are at or around the EU average for early school leaving; and two (Spain, Portugal) are still experiencing elevated rates of ESL in excess of twice the EU target.

**Table 3 – Trend (2009-12) in national rates of Early School Leaving**

	National average ESL (2009)	National average ESL (2012)	Evolution 2009 - 2012
<b>Spain</b>	21.4%	24.9%	+16.4%
<b>Portugal</b>	31.2%	20.8%	-33.3%
<b>United Kingdom</b>	15.7%	13.5%	-14.0%
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>14.2%</b>	<b>12.7%</b>	<b>-11.8%</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	11.1%	12.0%	+8.0%
<b>Hungary</b>	11.2%	11.5%	+2.7%
<b>Netherlands</b>	10.9%	8.8%	-19.3%
<b>Austria</b>	8.7%	7.6%	-12.6%
<b>Sweden</b>	10.7%	7.5%	-29.9%
<b>Poland</b>	5.3%	5.7%	+7.5%

*Source: Eurostat, 2012 [edat\_lfse\_14]*

Table 4 shows the difference in rates of Early School Leaving for men and women across the EU. In all cases, with the exception of Bulgaria, young men experience higher rates of ESL than their female counterparts. The average ESL rate for the EU's 28 member states stands at 14.4% for men and 10.9% for women, representing a gender gap in early school leaving of 3.5 percentage points. However, as with overall rates, there is a high degree of variability between countries, with Portugal seeing a gender gap as high as 12.8 percentage points and four more states (Malta, Cyprus, Latvia and Spain) with a gap of 8 percentage points or higher. Conversely, nine EU member states have relatively smaller differences between male and female ESL rates, including Romania, which, despite having high ESL rates display a much lower gender disparity than countries with similarly elevated ESL.

**Table 4 – Early School Leaving rates by sex (RESL.eu partners highlighted)**

	Early school leaving by sex (2012)			
	Total (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Gender gap (pp)
<b>Portugal</b>	20.8	27.1	14.3	12.8
<b>Malta</b>	22.6	27.5	17.6	9.9
<b>Cyprus</b>	11.4	16.5	7.0	9.5
<b>Latvia</b>	10.6	14.7	6.3	8.4
<b>Spain</b>	24.9	28.8	20.8	8.0
<b>Estonia</b>	10.5	14.0	7.1	6.9
<b>Italy</b>	17.6	20.5	14.5	6.0
<b>Luxembourg</b>	8.1	10.7	5.5	5.2
<b>Belgium</b>	12.0	14.4	9.5	4.9
<b>Greece</b>	11.4	13.7	9.1	4.6
<b>Poland</b>	5.7	7.8	3.5	4.3
<b>France</b>	11.6	13.4	9.8	3.6
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Lithuania</b>	6.5	8.1	4.6	3.5
<b>Denmark</b>	9.1	10.8	7.4	3.4
<b>Ireland</b>	9.7	11.2	8.2	3.0
<b>Netherlands</b>	8.8	10.2	7.3	2.9
<b>United Kingdom</b>	13.6	14.7	12.4	2.3
<b>Slovenia</b>	4.4	5.4	3.2	2.2
<b>Sweden</b>	7.5	8.5	6.3	2.2
<b>Finland</b>	8.9	9.8	8.1	1.7
<b>Hungary</b>	11.5	12.2	10.7	1.5
<b>Germany</b>	10.6	11.3	9.9	1.4
<b>Slovakia</b>	5.3	6.0	4.6	1.4
<b>Romania</b>	17.4	18.0	16.7	1.3
<b>Czech Republic</b>	5.5	6.1	4.9	1.2
<b>Croatia</b>	4.2	4.6	3.6	1.0
<b>Austria</b>	7.6	7.9	7.3	0.6
<b>Bulgaria</b>	12.5	12.1	13.0	-0.9

Source: Eurostat, 2012 [edat\_lfse\_14]

ESL as defined by the EU pertains to both the educational attainment level and current student status of young people in the 18-24 age group. The rationale behind the agenda for reducing ESL lies in the propensity for education to improve the labour market outcomes of young people making the transition from school to work. To this end, statistical data on the economic activity status of young people can be useful in providing insights into the relationship between labour market status and educational attainment level.

Table 5, below, provides a picture of ESL in the EU, through the lens of labour market outcomes, and can also be used to assess the rate of non-participation in employment, education or training – that is NEET (see Section 2.4) – through the lens of educational attainment.

Disaggregating the data like this, the youth population can be divided into mutually exclusive categories in terms of their educational attainment level and current student status on the one hand, and their labour market status on the other. In the table below, it can be seen that more than half (56.3%) of young people in the EU are current enrolled on a course of study. Those who are not students can be described as early school leavers if they have also not attained upper secondary education (regardless of their current economic activity). This corresponds to some 12.8% of all young people (the red and purple shaded areas of the table). Similarly, young people who are not enrolled as students, nor currently in employment can be described as NEET (regardless of their educational attainment level). The table shows this to be around 17% of the current group (the blue and purple shaded areas). More than one-fifth (21.1%) of 18-24 year olds can be classified in this way as having achieved at least a minimum required educational level and have experienced a positive labour market outcome. Policies focused on both ESL and NEET seek to increase the proportion of young people in this position, through the promotion of education as a means to improve their labour market situation.

**Table 5 – Young people aged 18-24 by educational attainment, current student status and economic activity (EU-27, 2012)**

		Below Upper Secondary education	Upper Secondary education or higher
Not enrolled on course of study	Employed	5.4%	21.1%
	Unemployed	5.2%	4.0%
	Inactive	2.2%	5.6%
Enrolled on course of study	Employed	56.3%	
	Unemployed		
	Inactive		

**Legend:**

Red + Purple shading = Early School Leavers

Blue + Purple shading = Not in Education, Employment or Training ('NEETs')

Grey shading = Currently enrolled on a course of study

Green shading = Currently employed, having attained at least upper secondary education



## 2.1.2 National data

As can be seen from the Eurostat figures, there exists a large degree of variation in ESL rates in EU member states. Within each country's specific context there is also a lesser or greater focus on ESL as an issue and, therefore, the extent to which public research and official statistics are focused on the examination and dissemination of relevant data. In Poland and the UK, for example, ESL is not part of the official discourse on education and youth policy. For this reason, data on the rate of ESL exist only in the official Europe-wide Eurostat datasets. Statistics are collected on the population's educational level, although this is most often related to their labour market status or continuing participation in education or training (see Publication 1 for a further examination of the policy discourses surrounding ESL).

In countries where there is a focus on ESL in the policy discourse, official statistics are generally readily available and used to inform policy and strategy at a national and regional level. In Flanders (Belgium), rates of ESL are disseminated with regard to the main socio-demographic 'categories' of gender, ethnicity (as defined by country of birth groups) and class (as defined by parental occupational groups) (see, for example, Hermans et al., 2003<sup>7</sup>). Table 4, below, for example, shows that native Belgian women have the highest rates of upper secondary education (92.8%), and the native population has overall a higher rate of qualification to this level than other ethnic groups – particularly Turkish and North African young people.

An ethnic gap in ESL is also the focus of research in Spain, where the Roma minority have been shown to complete upper secondary education at a rate of less than one quarter of the national non-Roma population (e.g. 'Roma population and Employment'<sup>8</sup>; 'Study on the Roma population of Catalonia'<sup>9</sup> and 'Social diagnostic on the Roma Community of Spain'.<sup>10</sup>).

**Table 6 – Flanders (Belgium): (Un)qualified school leavers by region of ethnic origin, and sex (Ducquet et al., 2005)**

Ethnic origin	Sex	School leavers		N
		Unqualified	Qualified	
Belgian native	Male	13.0%	87.0%	3881
	Female	7.2%	92.8%	3728
Turkish	Male	45.5%	54.5%	112
	Female	43.1%	56.9%	116
North African	Male	45.9%	54.1%	98
	Female	40.8%	59.2%	130
Southern European	Male	32.9%	67.1%	82
	Female	10.8%	89.2%	83
Other non-native	Male	20.0%	80.0%	350
	Female	17.0%	83.0%	365

Source: adapted from SONAR survey data, 2005

<sup>7</sup> Hermans, D., Opdenakker, M., de Gaer, E. & Van Damme, J. (2003). *Unequal opportunities in secondary education in Flanders. A longitudinal analysis of the interaction effects of gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status on the educational position reached*. (LOA-rapport nr. 7). Steunpunt 'Loopbanen doorheen Onderwijs naar Arbeidsmarkt'

<sup>8</sup> Fundación Secretariado Gitano (2005) *Roma population and Employment* - Madrid: FSG

<sup>9</sup> Pere Tarrés Foundation (2005) *Study on the Roma population of Catalonia*. Barcelona: Dept of Welfare & Family

<sup>10</sup> Laparra, Miguel (2011) *Social diagnostic on the Roma Community of Spain. An analysis contrasted with the Survey of CIS on Homes of the Roma Population, 2007*



In addition to gender and ethnicity, important distinctions in rates of ESL are shown to persist in countries with highly differentiated educational tracks, for example Belgium and the Netherlands. Indeed, in the Netherlands data (see Table 7) indicate that levels of ESL vary significantly in each educational 'stream'. For those students undertaking vocational secondary education (Mbo) the rate of ESL is decreasing – by more than a quarter (25.6%) between 2005/06 and 2011/12. The overall rate in this academic 'stream' is currently less than 7%, although this belies a large amount of variation according to educational type and level, as displayed in the table. Students in the first level of all types of vocational education (Bol, Bbl, *Examenleerling*) have a much higher rate of ESL than the average – between 34 and 45%. The rate remains high for students undertaking level 2 (10-20%), although for students studying in levels 3 and 4, the rate of ESL much lower – almost half the overall average for Mbo students – indicating that those studying up to a higher level of vocational education are much more likely to complete their studies.

**Table 7 – Netherlands: New ESLers in vocational secondary education (Mbo) by type and level of education, 2005/06-2011/12**

	2005/06			2011/12			
	No of students	No of ESLers	% ESL	No of students	No of ESLers	% ESL	+/- ESL, 2005/06-11/12
<b>Total (excluding adult education - Vavo)</b>	<b>389,711</b>	<b>36,274</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>393,565</b>	<b>27,002</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>-25.6%</b>
Bol1	12,592	4,577	36.3%	9,064	3,086	34.0%	-32.6%
Bol2	63,160	9,382	14.9%	57,252	6,674	11.7%	-28.9%
Bol3	67,919	4,586	6.8%	75,140	3,607	4.8%	-21.3%
Bol4	169,605	7,762	4.6%	176,236	6,196	3.5%	-20.2%
Bbl1	3,095	1,306	42.2%	2,424	1,100	45.4%	-15.8%
Bbl2	37,219	5,810	15.6%	33,765	4,322	12.8%	-25.6%
Bbl3	24,893	1,559	6.3%	26,211	1,004	3.8%	-35.6%
Bbl4	7,026	452	6.4%	8,205	321	3.9%	-29.0%
Examenleerling 1	134	81	60.4%	213	94	44.1%	16.0%
Examenleerling 2	1,413	385	27.2%	1,793	350	19.5%	-9.1%
Examenleerling 3	1,655	235	14.2%	1,690	130	7.7%	-44.7%
Examenleerling 4	1,000	139	13.9%	1,572	118	7.5%	-15.1%
Vavo	8,404	1,188	14.1%	5,754	822	14.3%	-30.8%

*Source: adapted from Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs (DUO), BRON register, 2005-12*

\*Secondary vocational education (Mbo) in the Netherlands is offered via school-based learning (Bol) or work-based learning (Bbl), at 4 different levels. Apprenticeship exams (Examenleerling) are also offered at these levels and adult vocational education (Vavo) is available (usually) for those aged over 22.

Whilst structural variations exist within highly differentiated national education systems, countries with a more comprehensive system can also see variation in rates of attainment, ESL and dropout according to socio-economic factors that transcend the educational institutional framework. This can often be seen in relation to geographic disparities in levels of wealth or development. Data from Portugal show that the north of the country (Norte) has a much higher rate of ESL than the other regions. The table below shows that since 2001, however, this region has seen much higher decreases in ESL (-22.4 percentage points) than other areas of the country. Despite clear pro-

gress being made, though, the level of ESL still remains above 25% in almost all areas of the north and even as high as 38.9% in Tâmega, a semi commercial, semi-industrial, semi-rural interior sub-region more vulnerable to the on-going political, social and economic crisis due to its greater permeability.

**Table 8 – Portugal: Rate of early school leaving amongst 18-24 year olds, by NUTS II regions of mainland Portugal and NUTS III areas of the North (Norte) region, 2001-11**

NUTS regions	Resident population aged 18-24 (2011)	Early school leavers, aged 18-24			
		2011	2011 (%)	2001 (%)	Change (pp)
<i>Minho-Lima</i>	18283	4514	24.7%	50.1%	-25.4
<i>Cávado</i>	36171	9210	25.5%	54.4%	-28.9
<i>Ave</i>	44373	13460	30.3%	57.2%	-26.8
<i>Grande Porto</i>	99429	26004	26.2%	40.5%	-14.4
<i>Tâmega</i>	50475	19622	38.9%	68.2%	-29.4
<i>Entre Douro e Vouga</i>	22397	6202	27.7%	54.1%	-26.4
<i>Douro</i>	15788	4345	27.5%	49.5%	-21.9
<i>Alto Trás-os-Montes</i>	14334	3567	24.9%	42.6%	-17.7
<b>Norte</b>	<b>301250</b>	<b>86924</b>	<b>28.9%</b>	<b>51.2%</b>	<b>-22.4</b>
<i>Centro</i>	169566	40936	24.1%	43.9%	-19.8
<i>Lisboa</i>	211101	50881	24.1%	34.0%	-9.9
<i>Alentejo</i>	52916	14774	27.9%	45.4%	-17.5
<i>Algarve</i>	32245	9501	29.5%	44.5%	-15.0
<b>Continente</b>	<b>767078</b>	<b>203016</b>	<b>26.5%</b>	<b>44.2%</b>	<b>-17.8</b>
<b>Portugal</b>	<b>814706</b>	<b>220472</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	<b>44.8%</b>	<b>-17.7</b>

*Source: adapted from Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE), Census 2001 & 2011*

### 2.1.3 Conclusion

National rates of ESL vary greatly between EU member states and also display significant regional variations within states. There is an overall downward trend in the rate of ESL towards the EU's Europe 2020 target of 10%, although some countries have seen modest increases in recent years. Some – most notably Sweden and Portugal – have made great strides in reducing their levels of ESL. Across the EU, young men are more likely to become early school leavers. Indeed, this gender gap in ESL persists in all but one member state, and is particularly high in Cyprus, Malta and Portugal.

The extent to which relevant data on ESL are examined and disseminated at a national or local level is dependent on the degree to which the issue is part of the official discourse on education and youth policy. In countries where ESL statistics are readily available, data can be used to reveal key patterns and trends in early school leaving within the national context. Data from Flanders (Belgium) and Spain, for example, suggest that migrants and ethnic minorities experience higher rates of ESL, as compared to native populations. Within national educational systems with strongly

differentiated 'tracks' (e.g. the Netherlands), it has also been shown that students undertaking vocational education have higher levels of ESL. National average rates of ESL can belie often significant regional variations. Local economic factors and labour market structures can contribute to differentiated demand patterns for lower-skilled labour and act as an incentive to leave school at the earliest opportunity and enter the labour market (for example, in the North of Portugal). Decentralised control over education and labour market policies (as in Belgium) can also be significant in creating regional disparities in terms of ESL rates.

## 2.2 Educational Attainment

### 2.2.1 European Union data

Educational attainment – particularly the attainment of upper secondary education, which in this context can be viewed as somewhat complementary to the concept of ‘early school leaving’ – is also routinely collected through international and EU-level statistical surveys as a key socio-economic variable. Eurostat define the youth educational attainment level as the percentage of 20-24 year olds having achieved at least an upper secondary educational qualification.

The table below shows that attainment levels for this age group in the EU as a whole have increased over the past ten years with around 4 in 5 young people having achieved at least an upper secondary qualification. However, this average rate again belies the variability that exists between member states. Amongst the RESL.eu partner countries, whilst countries such as the UK and the Netherlands are in line with the EU mean, Poland’s educational attainment level (89.8%) is almost one-and-a-half times that of Spain (62.8%) and there is a considerable gap between the majority of the partner countries to the levels seen in Portugal and Spain. This could be due to differences that exist in the educational systems of these countries, for example, non-compulsory upper secondary education or different labour market conditions for those making the transition from school to work, for example, a high demand for relatively lower-skilled labour.

Within the context of EU, national and regional policies promoting higher attainment and seeking to prevent early school leaving, there has been, since 2002, an increase in the rates of young people achieving upper secondary educational qualifications, most notably in Portugal, where the rate has increased by more than half. However, this has not been the case in all member states (Hungary, Sweden and Spain have seen declines in attainment rates) and the relative position of the member states in terms of youth educational attainment has not seen any dramatic change.

**Table 9 – Youth educational attainment level in RESL.eu partner countries, 2002-12**

	% 20-24 year olds with at least upper secondary education		
	2002	2012	Evolution 2002-12
Poland	88.1	89.8	+1.9%
Austria	85.1	86.6	+1.8%
Sweden	86.7	86.4	-0.3%
Hungary	85.7	83.5	-2.6%
Belgium	81.1	82.9	+2.2%
United Kingdom	77.2	81.7	+5.8%
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>76.5</b>	<b>80.3</b>	<b>+5.0%</b>
Netherlands	73.3	79.0	+7.8%
Portugal	44.2	67.4	+52.5%
Spain	64.0	62.8	-1.9%

Source: Eurostat, 2002-12 [edat\_ifse\_06]

The lagging behind of young boys in terms of educational attainment is well-established phenomenon and across the EU boys have lower rates of attainment than girls. Looking at national average data, however, it is apparent that this is a much more significant issue in some countries than others. For Portugal and Spain the gender gap is more than 12 percentage points, with the rate of boys achieving upper secondary qualifications hovering close to 50%. By contrast, in Poland and Austria the attainment rate for boys is more than 85%. Although both these countries have high overall rates of educational attainment, the gender gap is more than four times narrower in Austria than in Poland. Reducing this gap requires in some countries, therefore, a more gendered approach in order to increase the rate of young boys failing to reach the benchmark of upper secondary education.

**Table 10 - Gender differences in educational attainment levels in RESL.eu partner countries**

	% 20-24 year olds with at least upper secondary education (2012)		
	Boys	Girls	Gender gap (pp)
<b>Portugal</b>	59.6	75.6	16.0
<b>Spain</b>	56.7	69.1	12.4
<b>Poland</b>	86.6	93.1	6.5
<b>Netherlands</b>	76.0	82.1	6.1
<b>Belgium</b>	79.9	85.8	5.9
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>83.0</b>	<b>5.4</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	84.3	88.4	4.1
<b>United Kingdom</b>	80.2	83.4	3.2
<b>Hungary</b>	82.0	85.0	3.0
<b>Austria</b>	85.9	87.4	1.5

Source: Eurostat, 2012 [edat\_lfse\_06]

The data referred to above, taken from the EU LFS, relate to those young people aged 20-24, who will have completed their compulsory education. However, there is valuable statistical information on the current cohort of schoolchildren still undertaking their secondary education collected through the OECD's cross-national PISA programme. Comparative assessment of 15 year olds' academic performance in maths, reading and science results in periodic 'ranking' of countries across the developed world. Most EU member states are covered by the programme and their relative place in the rankings can therefore be compared not only to each other but against other major economies. Were the EU to be listed as a separate entity, its scores would merit being ranked in the top half of economies covered in the programme. The table below gives the overall ranking in each of the disciplines assessed for those countries participating in the current RESL.eu project, and shows a roughly even split between those states performing better, on average, than the EU standard and those ranked below this putative benchmark. The Netherlands and Poland appear in the top 10 countries for at least one discipline and Belgium and Austria also appear in the top 20 for maths. However, the rankings do show considerable variability in countries' placings, with Sweden, Hungary and Portugal notably ranking around 35<sup>th</sup> out of 65. It is worth noting that regional data from the PISA programme shows that Flanders alone would out-perform all other RESL.eu countries in maths and reading and be ranked third amongst the partners in science.

**Table 11 – PISA 2012 Student performance national ranking, by discipline**

	Maths			Reading			Science	
	Mean score	Ranking (out of 65)		Mean score	Ranking (out of 65)		Mean score	Ranking (out of 65)
<i>Flanders</i> <sup>2</sup>	531	N/A	<i>Flanders</i> <sup>2</sup>	518	N/A	Poland	526	9
Netherlands	523	10	Poland	518	10	Netherlands	522	14
Poland	518	14	Netherlands	511	15	<i>Flanders</i> <sup>2</sup>	518	N/A
Belgium	515	15	Belgium	509	16	United Kingdom	514	21
Austria	506	18	United Kingdom	499	23	Austria	506	23
United Kingdom	494	26	Austria	490	28	Belgium	505	24
<i>EU average</i> <sup>1</sup>	489	N/A	<i>EU average</i> <sup>1</sup>	489	N/A	<i>EU average</i> <sup>1</sup>	497	N/A
Portugal	487	31	Hungary	488	30	Spain	496	29
Spain	484	33	Spain	488	31	Hungary	494	32
Sweden	478	38	Portugal	488	33	Portugal	489	36
Hungary	477	39	Sweden	483	36	Sweden	485	38

<sup>1</sup>Putative positions were the EU to be ranked as a separate entity (EU average does not include scores for Malta)

<sup>2</sup>Putative positions relative to 'national' level economies, taken from PISA regional data

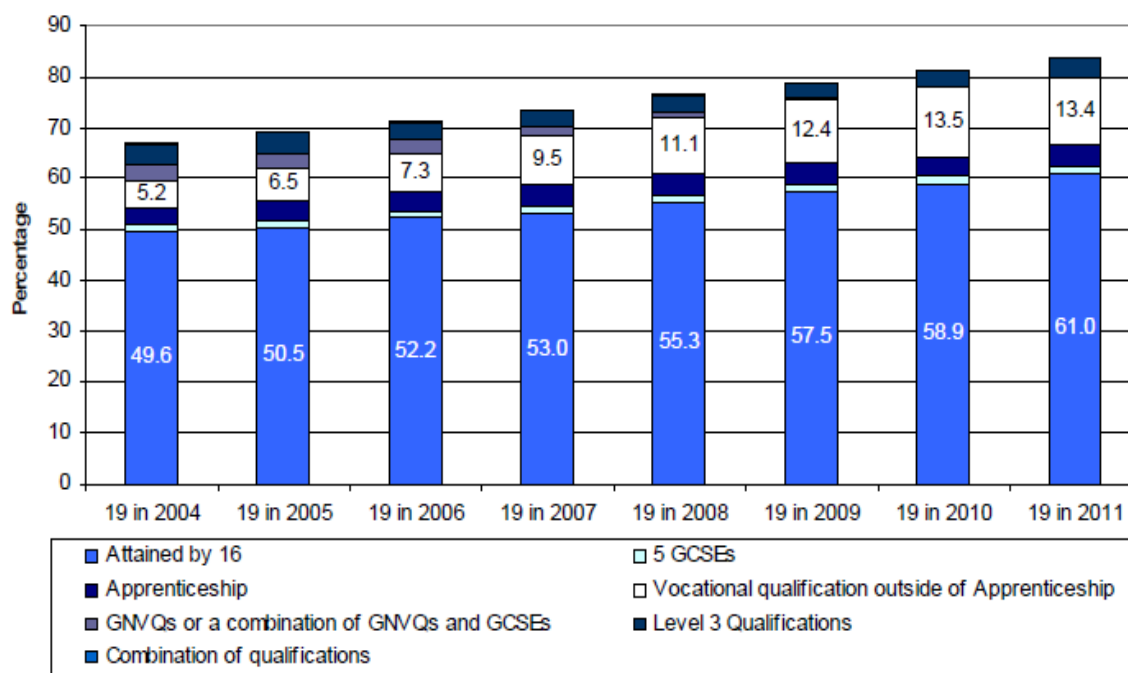
Source: OECD, PISA 2012 database

## 2.2.2 National data

Efforts have been made to harmonise attainment levels internationally in order to be able to effectively compare across different educational systems. However, statistics derived from national data sources pertain to national qualifications frameworks and, as such, have limited scope for meaningful cross-national comparison. That being said, it is possible to ascertain and compare overall trends in attainment rates using national data. Several factors appear to cut across national systems and variations in attainment rate by gender, ethnicity and parental education levels can be seen in most countries. However, specificities of educational systems, such as a differentiated track system, and regional variations in policy and/or socio-economic conditions have also seen disparities in attainment along these lines.

In the UK, for example, the percentage of 19-years-old attaining level 2 (upper secondary) qualifications has increased from under 70% in 2004 to over 80% in 2011, with those reaching this level by the age of 16 rising from fewer than 50% to 61% (see figure 2 below). At the same time, the proportion of people attaining level 2 between the ages of 16 and 19 through vocational qualifications other than apprenticeships has increased from 5.2% to 13.4% - a clear sign of the increased popularity of vocational studies which the national government has actively encouraged.

**Figure 2 - United Kingdom: people attaining Level 2 at 19 by qualification type and cohort**



Source: Department of Education (2012)- Matched Administrative Data

As far as regional variations are concerned, an interesting example is given by Portugal, where the Alentejo region has a much higher proportion of residents without any formal qualifications (15.5%) than the national average of 10.4%. Attainment of at least (upper) secondary education shows a high degree of regional variation, especially between Lisboa and the other Portuguese regions. Where as more than 40% of residents in Lisboa have completed this level of education, the rate is much lower in Norte (26.8%), Alentejo (25.4%) and the Região Autónoma dos Açores (23.6%). Pull factors to the Lisboa region for study and work may account for the relatively high rates in attainment here, as compared with other areas of the country.

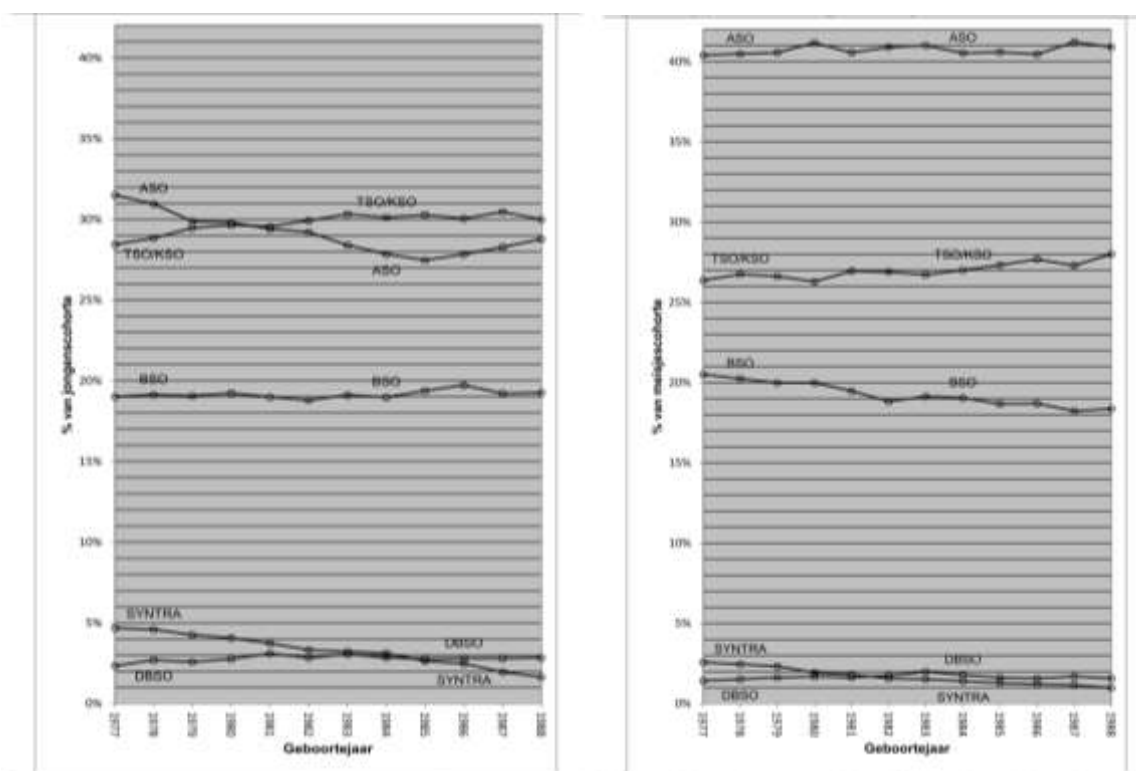
**Table 12 – Portugal: Resident adult population, by highest level of educational attainment, by region**

	Percentage of population aged 15 years or older							
	No qualific-ations	Basic education			Secondary education	Higher education	At least Secondary education	Total
		1 <sup>st</sup> Cycle	2 <sup>nd</sup> Cycle	3rd Cycle				
Continente	10.3	27.1	12.6	19.1	16.8	14.0	30.8	100
Norte	10.3	29.7	14.8	18.5	14.8	12.0	26.8	100
Centro	12.6	29.4	12.1	18.4	15.4	12.1	27.5	100
Lisboa	7.0	21.9	10.7	20.4	20.5	19.6	40.0	100
Alentejo	15.5	28.3	12.0	18.5	15.6	10.2	25.8	100
Algarve	10.9	24.7	11.6	21.1	19.5	12.2	31.7	100
R.A. Açores	10.5	29.1	18.1	19.1	13.2	10.0	23.2	100
R.A Madeira	12.6	28.1	14.8	17.6	15.3	11.6	27.0	100
Total	10.4	27.2	12.8	19.1	16.7	13.8	30.5	100

Source: adapted from Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE), Census 2011

In secondary education in Flanders, students undertake either General (ASO), Technical/Arts (TSO/KSO), Vocational (BSO) courses, or may choose to undertake an apprenticeship (SYNTRA or DBSO). This differentiated education system reveals a pronounced gender difference in terms of which track is followed by young people. For boys and girls, the proportion of those taking vocational qualifications has remained relatively stable between cohorts born in 1977 to those born in 1988 – at around 20%. However, as shown in Figure 2, a much greater proportion of girls are achieving an academic (ASO) secondary qualification. Indeed, for boys, a greater proportion now undertake a technical or arts (TSO/KSO) qualifications as part of their secondary education rather than the academic ASO diploma.

**Figure 3 – Flanders (Belgium): Qualifications of the cohort of boys (left) and girls (right), by type of qualification (as a percentage of the male/female cohort)**



Source: Van Landeghem et al. (2010), Flemish Ministry of Education pupils' database, 2010

### 2.2.3 Conclusion

Educational attainment amongst young people has remained relatively stable across the EU in the last ten years. However, substantial improvements have been seen in some countries – notably in Portugal, where upper secondary education was made compulsory from 2012. This having been said, there exists differences in attainment along gender and socio-economic lines. Large gender gaps in attainment exist in countries such as Portugal and Spain, where boys are much less likely to achieve an upper secondary qualification than their female contemporaries. Attainment is linked to socio-economic background, with parents' qualifications correlating with the level of education sought or achieved by their offspring. In addition, the local economic conditions must not be ignored in taking into account regional differences, where unskilled labour might be in higher demand in some areas or where skilled workers might be attracted to opportunities in others.

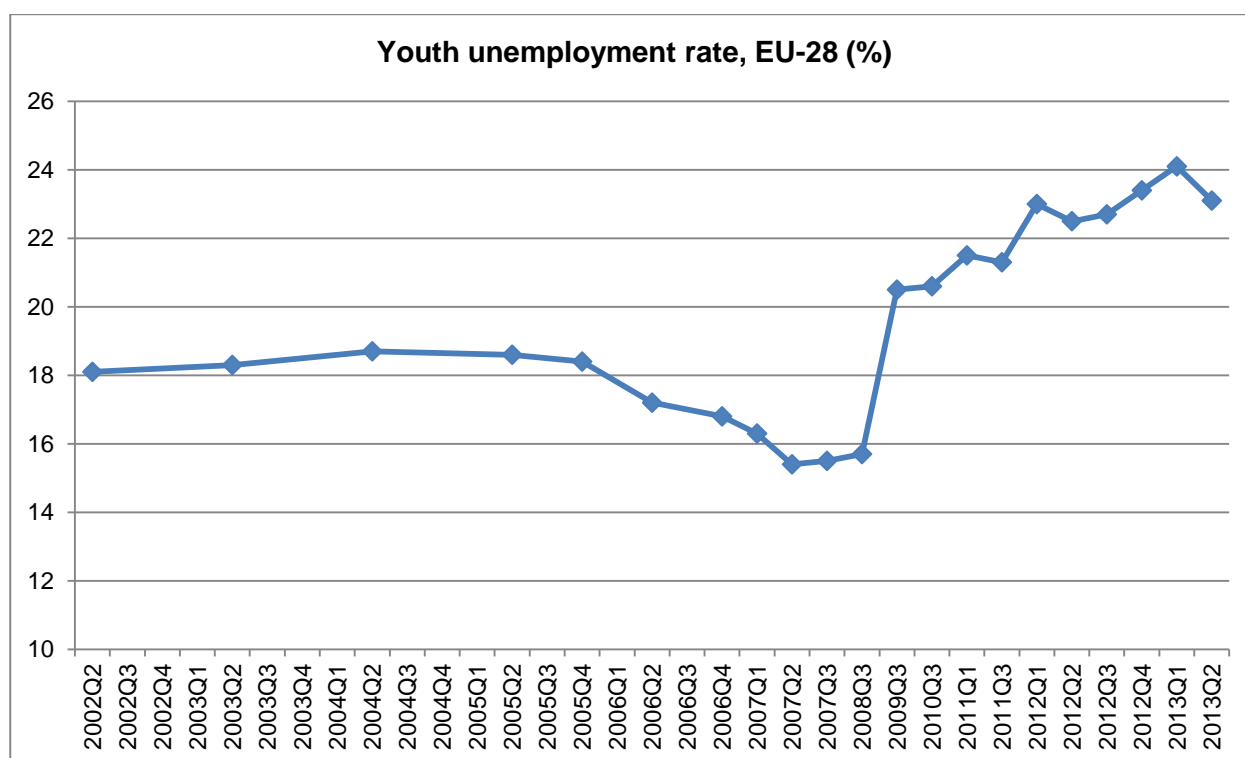


## 2.3 Youth Unemployment

### 2.3.1 European Union data

The youth unemployment rate is defined, using the EU LFS, as the proportion of economically active 15-24 year-olds who are not in work. Economically active refers to those young people who are in work or actively seeking employment, and so discounts full-time students. After a period of relatively stable rates of youth unemployment, the European Union as a whole has experienced a dramatic increase since the start of the economic recession in 2007/08. The average rate for the EU has risen to almost one-in-four young people looking for work unable to find any.

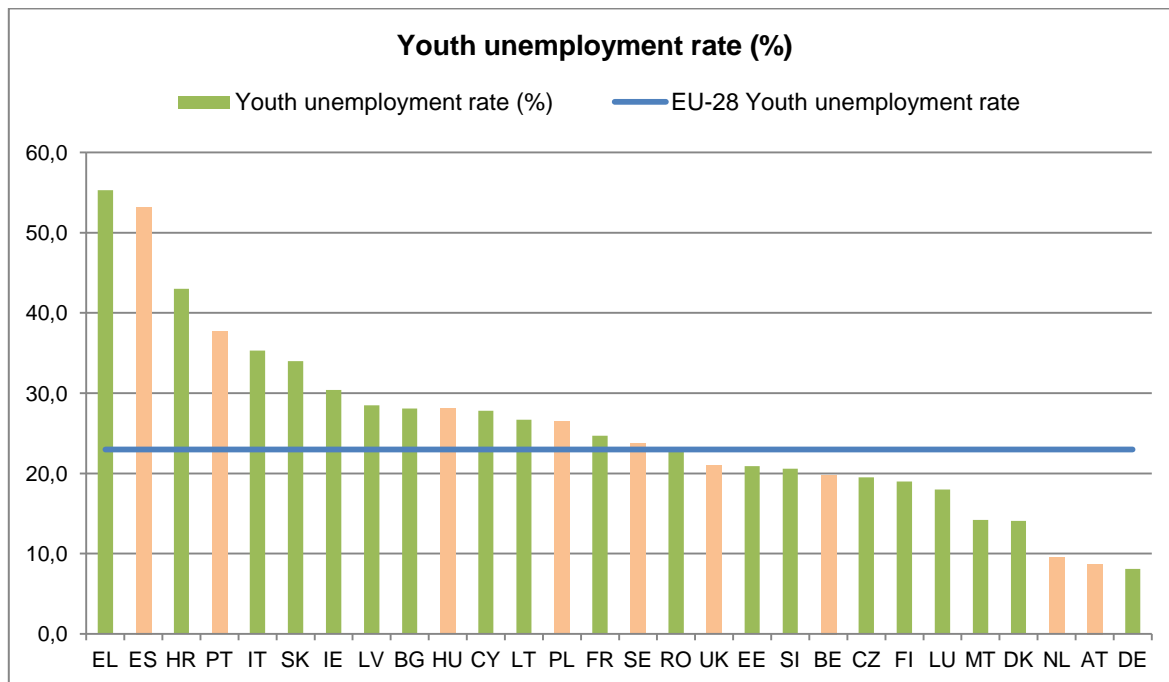
**Figure 4 – Trend in youth unemployment rate (%) for EU-28 (Q2 2002 – Q2 2013)**



**Source: Eurostat, 2013 [yuth\_empl\_100]**

This EU-wide average youth unemployment rate of 23.1% masks very large national differences, as can be seen in Figure 4, below. The RESL.eu project partners are represented at both ends of the scale, with partner countries Austria and the Netherlands seeing youth unemployment rates of less than 10%, whilst, on the other hand, Spain and Portugal experiencing unemployment of young people at more than three-times this level.

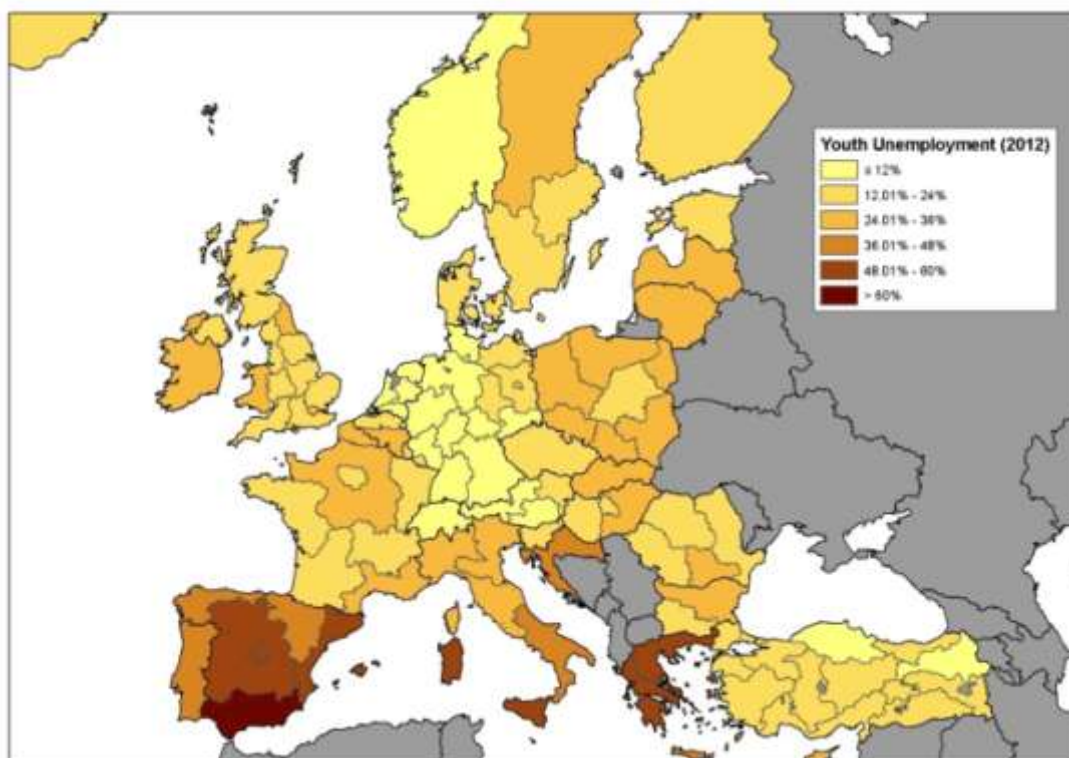
**Figure 5 – Unemployment rate among young people, aged 15-24 (%)**



Source: Eurostat, 2013 [yth\_empl\_100]

Variations in national rates of youth unemployment within the EU are mirrored at a regional level also and within-country disparities can be seen according to various local economic and/or policy conditions. Despite this, there is a clear North-South divide in Europe in terms of youth unemployment, with Greece, Spain (particularly the south of Spain), Portugal and the south of Italy seeing relatively much higher rates of unemployed young people.

**Map 2 – Unemployment rate amongst young people, aged 15-24, by NUTS-1 region (2012)**



Source: Eurostat, 2013 [yth\_empl\_110]

Increases in youth unemployment have been apparent since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2007/08. However, this must also be viewed within the context of an overall increase in unemployment, for both adult and youth populations. To analyse the relative levels of youth unemployment in terms of the wider labour market conditions it is useful to look at the youth-to-adult unemployment ratio. This indicator represents the extent to which young people are more adversely affected by unemployment compared to the adult (over 25) population. The table below shows that on average, in the EU, people are 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed if they are under 25 than if they are an adult worker. In Sweden the youth population experience unemployment at more than four times the rate of the adult population, whilst the ratio is 3 or higher in a further three RESL.eu partner countries (UK, Belgium and Poland). This suggests that there are specific conditions beyond the general macroeconomic situation that inhibit younger workers from finding employment.

**Table 13 – Youth-to-adult unemployment ratio in RESL.eu partner countries (2012)**

	Unemployment rate, 2012 (%)		
	(a) Youth population (15-24 year olds)	(b) Adult Population (25-64 year olds)	(a)/(b) Youth-to- adult unemployment ratio <sup>1</sup>
<b>Sweden</b>	23.6	5.8	4.1
<b>United Kingdom</b>	21	5.8	3.6
<b>Poland</b>	26.5	8.6	3.1
<b>Belgium</b>	19.8	6.5	3.0
<b>Hungary</b>	28.1	9.7	2.9
<b>Portugal</b>	37.7	14.5	2.6
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Austria</b>	8.7	3.7	2.4
<b>Spain</b>	53.2	22.8	2.3
<b>Netherlands</b>	9.5	4.5	2.1

<sup>1</sup>The ratio of the unemployment rate of young people (aged 15-24) to adults (aged 25-64): It is calculated by dividing the former (a) by the latter (b).

Source: Eurostat, 2013 [une\_rt\_a]

The link between education and employment is well established and for young people making their transition from school to work, qualification levels do have an impact on unemployment rates. The EU sets a benchmark of having achieved at least upper secondary education, without which young people are said to be ‘early school leavers’. Young people who have not attained this level of education are 1.5 times more likely to be unemployed (see table 14), whilst in countries with high rates of youth unemployment, as compared to the adult population, such as Sweden, the UK and Belgium, achieving at least this level of education appears even more important, with rates of youth unemployment for those without upper secondary education more than double their better-qualified counterparts.

**Table 14 – Youth unemployment rates in RESL.eu countries, by highest level of education**

	Youth unemployment rate, 2012 (%)		
	(a) Education level below upper secondary (ISCED 0-2)	(b) Education level above upper secondary (ISCED 3-6)	(a)/(b) Educational level: unemployment ratio <sup>1</sup>
<b>Sweden</b>	38.7	17.6	2.2
<b>United Kingdom</b>	37.2	17.3	2.1
<b>Belgium</b>	32.8	15.5	2.1
<b>Netherlands</b>	13.3	6.5	2.0
<b>Hungary</b>	44.9	24.6	1.8
<b>Austria</b>	12.4	6.8	1.8
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>1.5</b>
<b>Spain</b>	59.9	45.8	1.3
<b>Poland</b>	33.3	25.5	1.3
<b>Portugal</b>	39.3	36.3	1.1

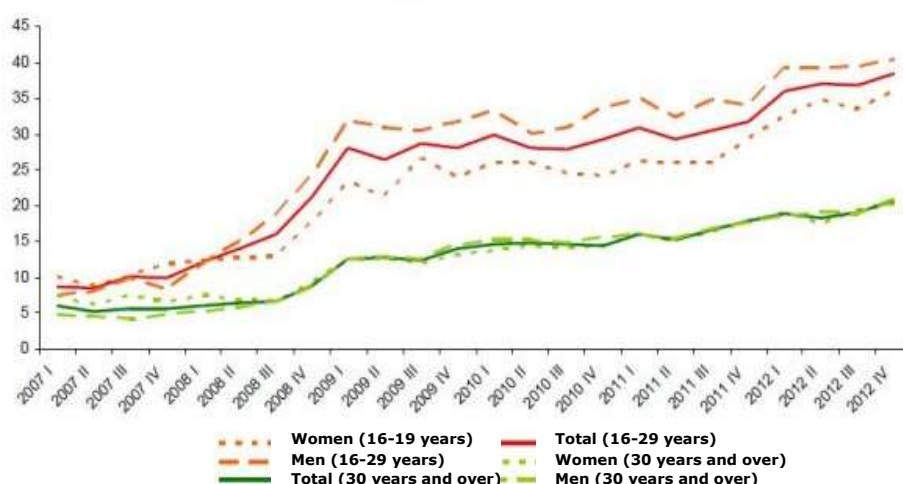
<sup>1</sup>The ratio of the unemployment rate of young people without upper secondary education to those who have attained this level of education: It is calculated by dividing the former (a) by the latter (b).

Source: Eurostat, 2013 [yth\_empl\_010]

### 2.3.2 National data

Since the economic recession in 2007/08, there has been a substantial rise in unemployment and, particularly in youth unemployment. For example, in Catalonia, the youth employment rate is significantly higher than for the adult population (Figure 5). The young population appeared to feel the effects of the recession much sooner and more acutely than those over 30, seeing a sharp rise in unemployment from the beginning of 2008, whilst a comparatively smaller increase was seen in the adult population some two quarters later. Additionally, there appears to be a negligible gender gap in unemployment rate amongst those aged 30 and over, whilst amongst the younger population, men are more likely to be unemployed than women – a gap that scarcely existed before the economic crisis.

**Figure 6 – Catalonia (Spain): Quarterly trend in the rate of unemployment, by sex and age group, (2007-12)**



Source: Idescat, *Enquesta de Població Activa*, 2007-12

As shown in the EU data above (Table 13), Sweden has a very high youth-to-adult unemployment ratio, with young people more than four times likely to be out of work than adults. Table 15, below, compounds this issue as one clearly linked to educational attainment. For each of the years throughout the economic recession, a higher level of education can be seen a significant protective factor against unemployment. The rate of unemployment amongst those with no higher than primary education has risen to close to one-in five (18.9%), whilst at the same time those with upper secondary experience a rate of unemployment less than half of this (7.5%) and those with tertiary qualifications lower still and, at 5.0%, below the overall rate for the adult population.

**Table 15 – Sweden: Youth unemployment rate, by highest level of education (%)**

	Youth unemployment rate (%)		
	Primary education	Upper secondary education	Tertiary education
2007	13.1	5.5	4.0
2008	14.2	5.5	3.9
2009	16.7	8.5	5.0
2010	18.2	8.5	5.2
2011	17.6	7.6	4.8
2012	18.9	7.5	5.0

Source: Statistics Sweden, 2007-2012

It is well-established that young people entering the labour market without sufficient level of education can experience a much higher likelihood of being unemployed than those with at least secondary educational qualifications. In the Netherlands, for example, young people classified as ‘low educated’ (*laag opgeleid*) have an unemployment rate of 16.9%, as compared with those with secondary (9.9%) or higher education (12.9%).

In addition, the table below shows that even with at least secondary education there is no guarantee of secure employment contracts for young people. In fact the rate of ‘highly-educated’ young

people with a permanent contract is scarcely above those classed as having a low level of education. This situation may be as a result of the uncertainty produced by the economic crisis, although it may also be indicative of a trend towards more flexible labour contracts imposed at a time of relatively high youth unemployment. As such, this issue may go beyond the wider macroeconomic conditions and young workers may be facing difficulties in securing permanent work regardless of their educational qualifications.

**Table 16 – Netherlands: Labour market situation of (economically active) young people, aged 15-25, by level of education (2012)**

	Below secondary education		Secondary education		Higher education	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
<b>Labour force</b>	<b>308,000</b>		<b>466,000</b>		<b>132,000</b>	
Unemployed	52,000	16.9%	46,000	9.9%	17,000	12.9%
Employed	248,000	-	403,000	-	104,000	-
<i>Permanent contract</i>	<i>96,000</i>	<i>38.7%</i>	<i>180,000</i>	<i>44.7%</i>	<i>40,000</i>	<i>38.5%</i>
<i>Flexible contract</i>	<i>152,000</i>	<i>61.3%</i>	<i>223,000</i>	<i>55.3%</i>	<i>64,000</i>	<i>61.5%</i>

*Source: adapted from Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs (DUO), BRON register, 2012*

Differentials in youth unemployment rates can also be seen in relation to regional labour markets as some areas experience greater detrimental effects of the economic crisis, for example, higher concentration of impacted industries, such as manufacturing, or a highly competitive labour market. The map below shows the youth unemployment rate for the regions and nations of the UK, with a significant variation in regional rates. In general, a North-South divide can be identified, with all three regions in the north of England experiencing elevated unemployment rates. In addition, Wales, with its high dependence on manufacturing and London, with its highly-competitive labour market, also have youth unemployment rates greater than one-in-four young people.

**Map 3 – UK: Regional unemployment rates (16-24 year olds)**



*Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2012*

## Conclusion

Youth unemployment has seen a significant increase since the economic recession, along with unemployment rates in the adult population. However, issues affecting young people and their successful transition into the labour market go beyond the macroeconomic difficulties being felt across Europe. High youth-to-adult unemployment ratios show that young people are being affected more by the economic crisis than adult workers with more experience in the job market. In countries where this ratio is particularly high, there may be considerable additional barriers preventing young people from entering the labour market. Even amongst young workers, there appears to be a trend towards more flexible labour contracts, which will have a detrimental effect on the job security of those entering the labour market for the first time.

A well-established protective factor from these worrying trends in youth unemployment is gaining higher educational qualifications, with the attainment of at least upper secondary education appearing to substantially reduce the risk of being unemployed across the EU. As with other indicators, there also exists a degree of in-country regional variation, linked to specific local economic factors that impact on young people's school-to-work transitions. To this end, the youth unemployment rate can serve as a context within which to conduct empirical research on the effects of early school leaving in an area.

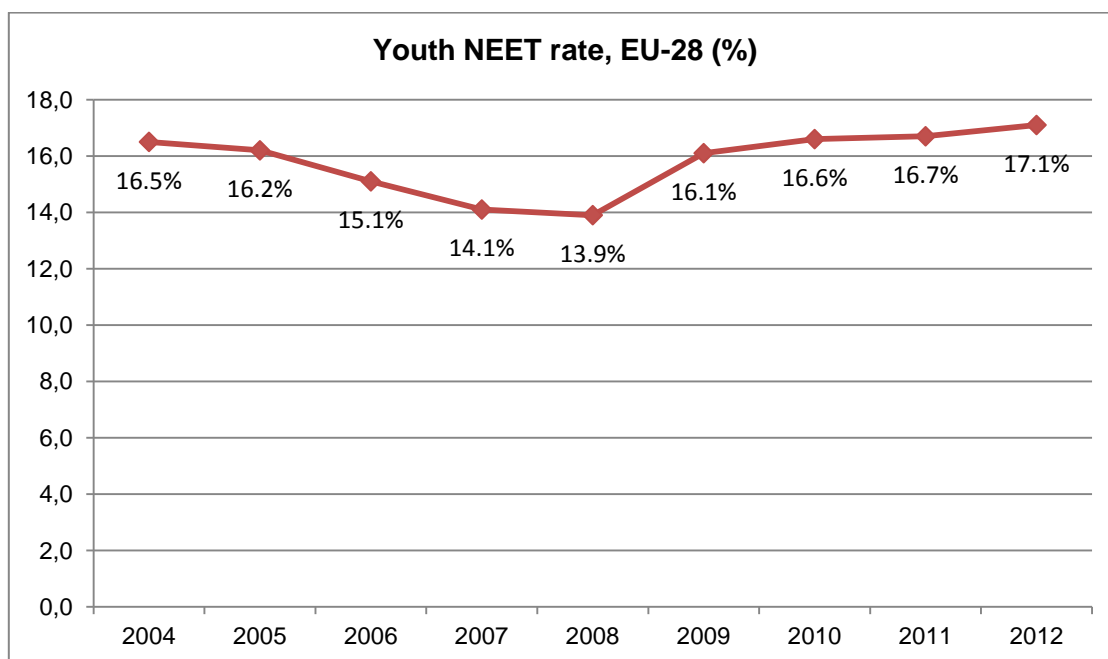
## 2.4 Non-participation in Education, Employment or Training

### 2.4.1 European Union data

Beyond a focus on educational attainment, it is useful also to look at the labour market outcomes of young people. As shown in Section 2.1 (Table 5), young people may or may not be enrolled on a course of study and may additionally be employed or, conversely, either economically inactive (studying full-time or removed from the labour market for another reason) or unemployed (looking for work, but unable to find any) – that is, ‘not in employment’. Those young people who are neither in employment nor education or training – so-called NEETs – are amongst the most vulnerable, as they can be assumed to be having difficulties in finding a job, whilst not seeking to acquire further skills via training or education. For this reason young NEETs are a group that is of particular interest to policy makers at national and EU level as initiatives are sought to reintegrate these young people back into the labour market (either directly or via training programmes).

The average NEET rate in the EU as a whole for 2012 was 17.1% of 18-24 year olds, a figure that had seen a significant rise since the onset of the economic crisis in 2007/08 (Figure 6). However, across the EU, rates of young people NEET vary greatly. In 2012, for example, the Netherlands had a rate of 5.7% whilst in Spain this was more than four times that figure (23.8%). This variation in NEET rates is not only related to the macroeconomic conditions. How young people react to a reduction in the demand for lower skilled labour varies according to national education systems and labour market structures. Additionally, cultural factors such as an expectation of young women to start a family, rather than enter the labour market, contributes to an elevated level of economic inactivity amongst young people in several member states.

**Figure 7 – Trend in percentage of 18-24 year olds NEETs, 2004-12**



Source: Eurostat, 2004-12 [edat\_ifse\_20]



Amongst the participant countries in the RESL.eu countries the Netherlands and Austria have the lowest proportion of NEETs – both less than 10% of 18-24 year olds. Highest rates of NEET were observed in Spain (23.8%), Hungary (19.5%) and Portugal (18.7%). Differences in work cultures can also be seen in Table 17 as almost half of young people in education or training in the Netherlands work in addition to their studies. This is almost three times the average for the EU-28 and more than six times the proportion of working students in Portugal, Spain, Belgium or Hungary. Experience in the labour market whilst still undertaking studies would benefit the full transition from school to work for young people in those countries where this is seen as ‘the norm’, which is, in turn, reflected in lower NEET rates seen there.

**Table 17 – Rates of participation in education and training, by employment status (including NEET rates)**

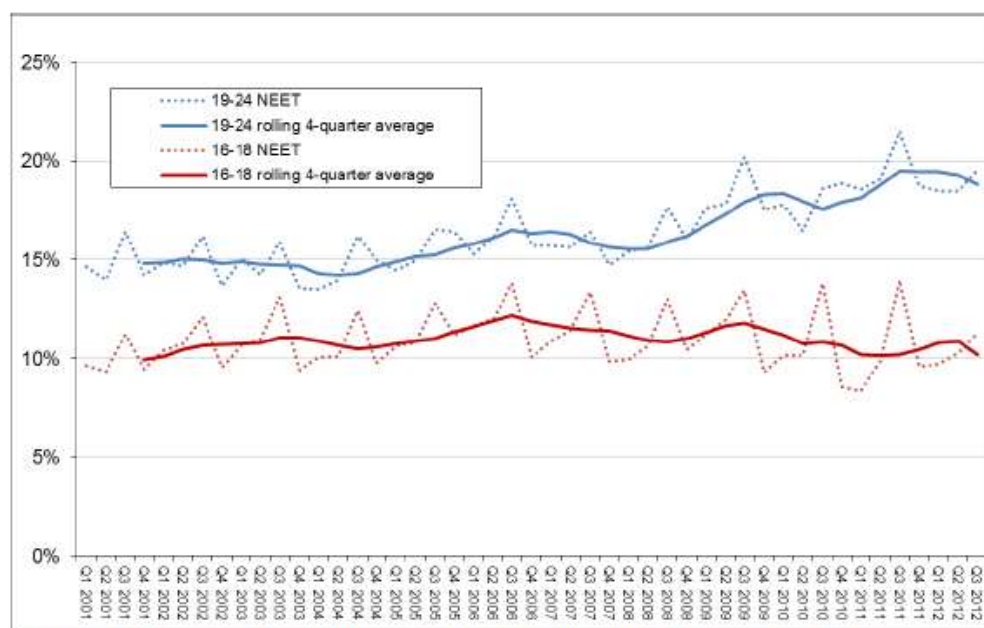
	In education or training (%)		Not in education or training (%)	
	In employment	Not in employment	In employment	Not in employment (NEET)
<b>Spain</b>	7.4	51.3	17.6	<b>23.8</b>
<b>Hungary</b>	2.7	54.9	22.9	<b>19.5</b>
<b>Portugal</b>	7.5	49.2	24.7	<b>18.7</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	22.0	23.1	36.5	<b>18.1</b>
<b>EU-28</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>40.8</b>	<b>26.4</b>	<b>17.1</b>
<b>Poland</b>	11.0	51.2	21.9	<b>15.9</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	5.3	50.7	28.9	<b>15.0</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	23.0	37.6	28.8	<b>10.5</b>
<b>Austria</b>	26.3	27.7	38.3	<b>7.8</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	45.8	24.4	24.1	<b>5.7</b>

*Source: Eurostat, 2012 [edat\_ifse\_18]*

#### 2.4.2 National data

As shown in Figure 7, the trend in NEET rates in the UK over the past decade reveals that the 19-24 age group has been more severely affected by the economic recession than the younger 16-18 group. Whilst the rate of young people not in employment, education or training has always been greater for the older age group the gap has widened significantly since the crisis as more young people choose to continue their studies for longer before seeking employment in a job market with reduced demand for low-skilled labour. The older age group, facing difficult labour market conditions without the framework of formal secondary education structures has seen a rise in the level of NEETs, with the rate now almost double that of their younger contemporaries.

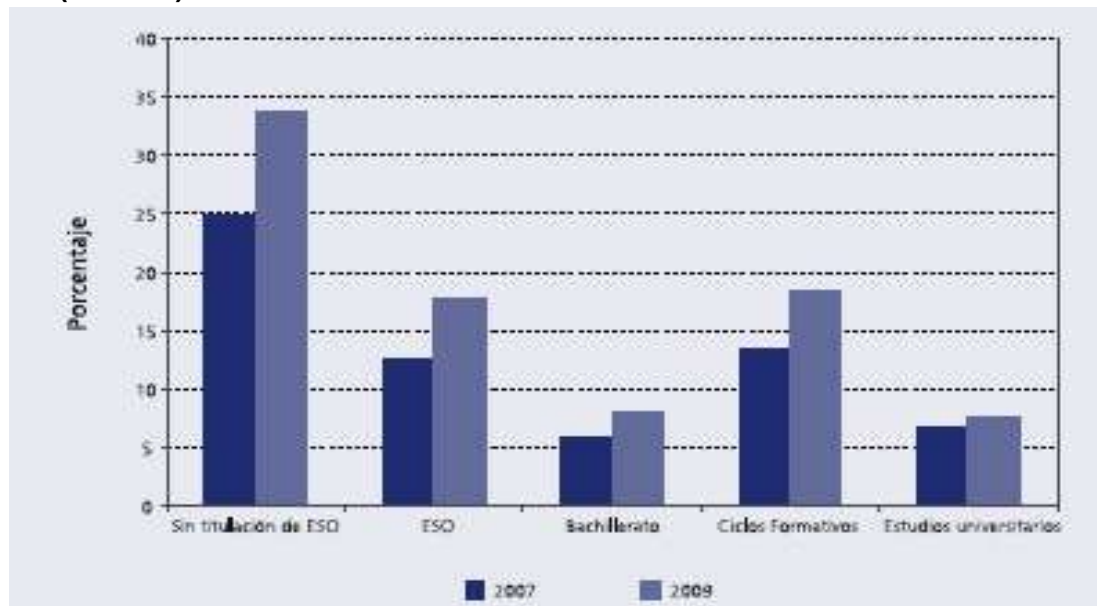
**Figure 8 – United Kingdom: Proportion of young people NEET by age group, 2001-12**



Source: ONS, Labour Force Survey, 2001-12

Remaining in formal education appears to be a strategy pursued by many young people across member states in order to insulate themselves from the adverse effects of the economic crisis. In Catalonia acquiring at least an upper secondary qualification reduces the likelihood of a young person to be NEET. As can be seen in Figure 8 below, more than one in three young people without a basic secondary qualification (ESO) are NEET, a figure that has risen from one in four since the start of the crisis. Those having completed ESO or vocational courses (*cursos formativos*) also experience relatively high rates of being NEET, above 15%. Young people with an upper secondary qualification or university education are the least likely to be neither in work nor studying. This last group have also seen the smallest increase in NEET rates since the start of the recession in 2007. By contrast, the rate of those without even a basic education being without employment or not currently studying has risen much more drastically.

**Figure 9 – Catalonia (Spain): Young people aged 16-24 not in work or education, by level of education (2007-09)**



Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE), Encuesta de Población Activa (EPA), 2007-09

### 2.4.3 Conclusion

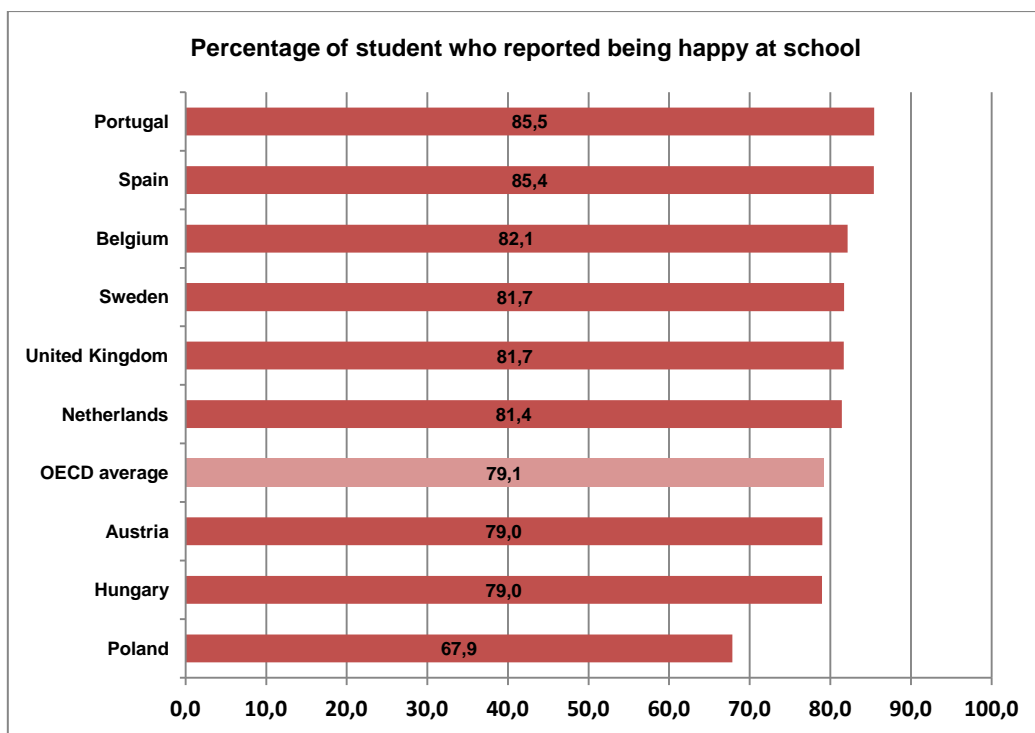
‘Older’ young people (19-24 year olds) are affected more by macroeconomic conditions as can be seen by rises in the rates of NEET since the economic crisis began. In particular, at times of tough economic conditions, some young people have found it strategic to continue their education for as long as possible to protect themselves from adverse labour market conditions. A return to education or continuation beyond what might previously have been considered is also beneficial to the young people in the longer term, increasing their likelihood of finding employment and protecting them against becoming NEET in the future.

## 2.5 Attitudes to School and Learning

### 2.5.1 European Union data

There is very little Eurostat data that focus on school-aged children and, where data are collected, the focus is on school enrolment, participation and educational attainment statistics. The EU statistical agency does not regularly collect attitudinal data regarding students' views on school or learning. However, the OECD's PISA programme (see Section 2.2, above) does include variables on children's self-reported feelings on their school life and learning environment. The latest PISA statistics show that on average 79.1% of pupils aged 15 in OECD economies report that they are 'happy at school'. Within the partner countries of the RESL.eu project, Portugal and Spain have very high levels of student satisfaction at school – both above 85% - in marked contrast to the relatively high levels of early school leaving seen in these states. Conversely, fewer than 68% of Polish students described themselves as happy at school, despite rates of ESL much lower than the EU average.

**Figure 10 – Percentage of students who reported being 'happy at school' (PISA 2012)**



RESL.eu partner countries according to percentage of students who 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the statement 'I feel happy at school'

**Source: OECD, PISA 2012 database**

Further variables contained within the rich cross-national PISA survey include key questions on how schoolchildren feel school has been helpful *for them*. Table 19 provides national averages for students' attitudes to school in terms of whether it has prepared them for adult life; given them the confidence to make decisions; prepared them for entering the job market; and whether they feel as though school has been a waste of time.

In terms of the practical use that students feel that school has had for them, young people in Poland appear to hold less positive views (70.5% ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’) – 15 percentage point below the OECD average and more than 20 points below students in Spain and Portugal. Similarly, Polish and Dutch schoolchildren hold a less favourable overall opinion of the value of school than other countries. More than one in five students in Poland and the Netherlands agreed or strongly agreed that school had been a waste of time, compared to the OECD average of less than 14%.

Spanish and, particularly, Portuguese young people expressed the most positive attitudes to school, with above-average levels of students reporting that school had given them confidence to make decisions and that it had taught them things that could be useful in a job. Students in these countries also have the lowest levels of dissatisfaction with school’s ability to prepare them for adult life as well as the least agreement with the notion that school has been a waste of time.

**Table 18 – Attitudes to school (PISA 2012)**

	School has done little to prepare me for adult life when I leave school*	School helped to give me confidence to make decisions	School has taught me things that could be useful in a job	School has been a waste of time*
<b>OECD average</b>	<b>69.3</b>	<b>75.2</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>86.7</b>
Austria	74.4	69.7	86.3	88.8
Belgium	73.7	72.6	86.7	85.5
Hungary	76.1	78.8	88.5	86.6
Netherlands	71.9	67.2	84.0	79.4
Poland	61.4	70.7	70.5	78.4
Portugal	77.7	86.3	92.0	91.1
Spain	71.5	83.9	90.3	89.4
Sweden	64.2	69.4	84.8	81.4
United Kingdom	73.1	81.6	84.2	92.0

RESL.eu partner countries listed according to percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements given (\* indicates percentage who disagreed or strongly disagreed)

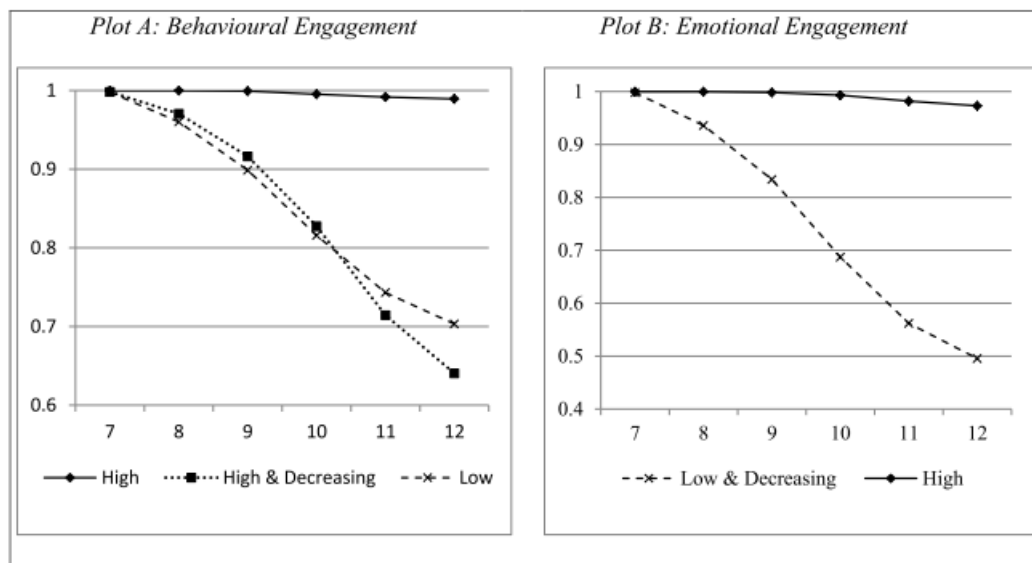
**Source: OECD, PISA 2012 database**

## 2.5.2 National data

National statistical agencies, similar to Eurostat, tend to focus their primary data collection on working-age populations, with comparatively little attention on young people’s attitudes to school and learning. Where official statistics are collected by government departments, there is again a preference for figures on enrolment, graduation rates and attainment levels. Attitudinal variables are collected, however, as part of a wide range of academic research or large-scale statistical surveys that have a more sociological and psychological focus on education, youth development and school-to-work transitions. Within this context, data can and have been used to construct broad measures of school engagement with the aim of being able to analyse typologies of students identified by their prevalent attitudes to school and learning.

In Flanders (Belgium), for example, Lamote et al. (2013) have used longitudinal LOSO data to perform statistical analyses showing that students with ‘low’ or ‘high and decreasing’ behavioural engagement (operationalised through students’ attitudes to homework) have a higher chance of dropping out of their course; whilst this is most clearly the case for students with ‘low and decreasing’ emotional engagement (operationalised using variables relating to students’ attitudes to their teachers).

**Figure 11 – Flanders (Belgium): Estimated probability of course completion by behavioural/emotional engagement typology, by academic year**



Source: Lamote et al. (2013)

In England (UK), findings from the Longitudinal Study of Young People (Barnes et al. 2010) also demonstrate that different manifestations of disengagement are associated with different disadvantages later on. In particular, truancy appears to be associated with risky behaviours, whilst low aspirations are more associated with inactivity and low attainment. The study also highlighted the importance of policies aimed not just at pupils, but also at parents, since parents of young people in these groups were more likely to be less engaged with their child's education and less likely to recognise the importance of getting a good education.

In some countries, it also appears that low levels of school engagement vary considerably across different types of schools. A 2011 study on lower secondary schools in the Polish city of Warsaw, for example, suggested that students in public (state) schools are more likely to have higher levels of truancy and bad behaviour than those in non-public schools (see Figure 12 below). However, this difference is particularly marked in Year 1, but tends to narrow down for those students who progress to Year 3.

**Table 19 – Warsaw (Poland): Percentage of students with school problems in public and non-public lower secondary schools (13-15 years old)**

**Public school students**

<b>School problem</b>	<b>Year I (N=2,735) %</b>	<b>Year II (N=2,695) %</b>	<b>Year III (N=2,725) %</b>
Missing individual lessons (at least once in the last 4 weeks)	20	37*	47*
Truancy (at least once in the last four weeks)	12	23*	25
Negative evaluation of behaviour in the last semester	3.5	8*	8
School year repetition (at least once in life)	5	6	6

**Non-public school students**

<b>School problem</b>	<b>Year I (N=2,735) %</b>	<b>Year II (N=2,695) %</b>	<b>Year III (N=2,725) %</b>
Missing individual lessons (at least once in the last 4 weeks)	12	29*	41*
Truancy (at least once in the last four weeks)	4	14.5*	17
Negative evaluation of behaviour in the last semester	1	1	2
School year repetition (at least once in life)	1	2	1

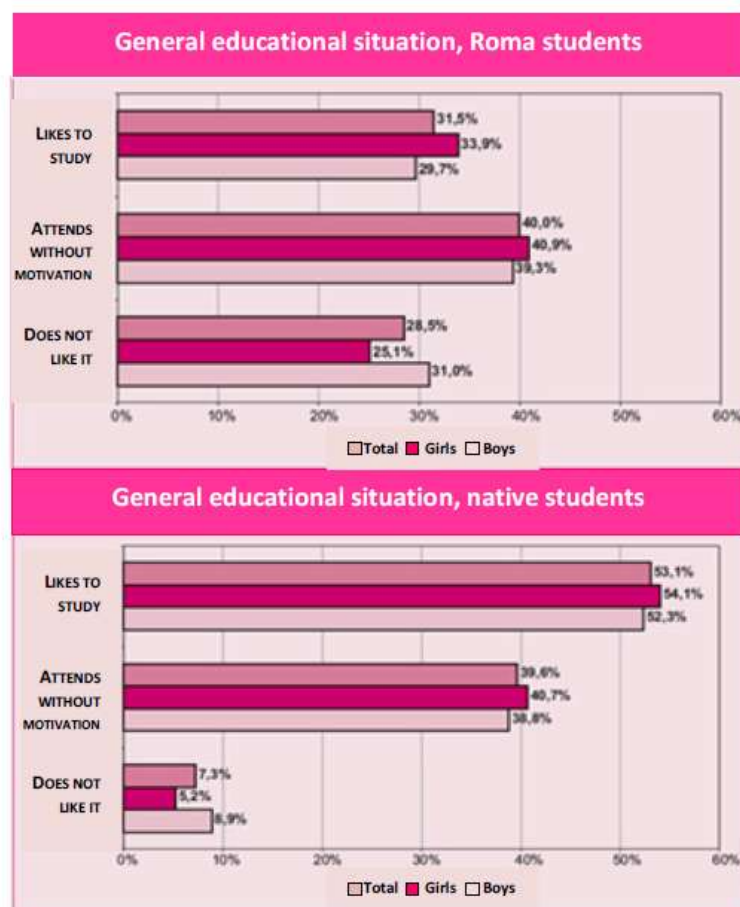
*Source: Ostaszewski et al. (2011)*

*Note ( \*) statistically significant at the  $p < 0.05$  level*

In some countries, the collection of data on attitudes to school has highlighted differences between groups of students according to socio-economic, demographic or ethnic characteristics. The Fundacion Secretariado Gitano's 2006 study in Spain on Roma schoolchildren shows that there is a general overall difference among Spanish Roma students and their Spanish non-Roma peers in terms of whether they like to study and whether they attend school with motivation. Figure 13, below, shows that in both ethnic groups, girls tend to like to study and tend to attend school more than boys. However, amongst Roma students there is a lack of motivation to go to school can be seen in relation to other ethnic groups. The proportion of Roma children who report that they do not like to go to school is almost four times as high (28.5%) as the national average (7.3%).



**Figure 12 – Spain: General educational situation of Roma and non-Roma children (2006)**



*Source: Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Integration and Trajectory of Roma Girls in Basic Education study, Spain, 2006*

### 2.5.3 Conclusion

It might be expected that countries with higher average rates of ESL have lower levels of student ‘happiness’ or satisfaction with their school lives. However, the PISA data show just the opposite: Spain and Portugal, with relatively high rates of ESL nevertheless have a student ‘happiness’ rate of more than 85%. ‘Happiness’, as captured by the PISA study, does not appear to contribute significantly to students’ decisions to leave school early. However, it is important to state that national averages belie the often dynamic overall picture amongst different groups of young people.

National-level studies have shown that engagement is a significant factor in dropout decisions and that attitudes to school and learning differ substantially according to various socioeconomic, demographic or cultural-normative factors. Whilst those students who are ‘happy’ in school might not be deterred from leaving school early, these young people are not necessarily engaged with the educational process. It is clear that it is engagement with school that is the overriding insulating factor against ESL.

## 2.6 Future Plans, Aspirations and Reasons for Leaving School Early

### 2.6.1 European Union data

As mentioned above (Section 2.5.1), Eurostat and other international statistical agencies tend to collect quantitative data on the basis of factual information, such as enrolment statistics, participation rates or attainment levels. There is, therefore, a considerable dearth of systematically collected, cross-national comparative data regarding students' future plans or aspirations whilst still in compulsory education – much less, information of why those who left school early chose to do so. The OECD's PISA programme, does collect some attitudinal variables from participants (all students still within the compulsory stage of schooling), although it does not ask young people about their intentions for future study, direct entry into the workforce or other potential transitions. This lack of data makes it difficult to ascertain the diverse individual-level reasons why young people may or may not decide to leave school early and, further, the extent to which these converge or differ across the EU, and under different educational institutions, also remains elusive.

### 2.6.2 National data

Despite a substantial shortage of cross-national data in this area, an important source of information remain in national or regional surveys, undertaken either by government departments responsible for education or as part of academic research. These surveys of young people can reveal general trends in aspirations and future plans in terms of educational attainment or dropout. Within the context of national education systems, comparing cohort members experiencing similar choices and macroeconomic conditions can give a clearer picture of the level of aspiration and the reasons for this which young people provide for choosing to leave formal education. Representative surveys of young people can also elicit trends in socio-demographic traits for a more nuanced insight into the plans and aspirations or different groups of youngsters from within the same cohort.

Table 19, for example, is taken from the '*Continuar o abandonar. L'alumnat estranger a l'educació secundària*' (Continue or leave. Foreign students in secondary education; 2010) study carried out in Catalonia and shows students' plans for further study or entry into the labour market as at the end of compulsory (lower secondary) education. Although the intention to continue on to upper secondary general education is the most popular for both Spanish students and those with foreign nationality, there is a substantial difference (20.2 pp) in the relative size of these groups in terms of their aspiration to continue with their academic careers.

**Table 20 – Catalonia (Spain): Students' plans at the end of ESO, by nationality (2010)**

Nationality	Lower Secondary education	Upper Secondary general education	Vocational courses	Other studies	Working only	Working and studying	Total
Spanish	5 0.6%	517 64.5%	175 21.8%	14 1.7%	22 2.7%	68 8.5%	801 100.0%
Foreign	17 5.2%	145 44.3%	84 25.7%	17 5.2%	14 4.3%	50 15.3%	327 100.0%

Source: Serra, C. & Palaudarias, J.M. (2010) '*Continuar o abandonar. L'alumnat estranger a l'educació secundària*' study questionnaire

The Catalanian study undertaken with students coming to the end of their compulsory education can give an indication of these young people's intentions. Conversely, it is also interesting to look at those students who decided not to continue on to upper secondary education or those who began to study at this level but who did not complete the course. This last group, the focus of a Statistics Sweden report (*'Ungdomar utan fullföljd gymnasieutbildning'*, Young people without completed high school education; 2007) gives an indication as to the reasons for which early school leavers do not complete the (EU-defined) minimum level of education, despite an initial intention to do so (those early school leavers who did not even choose to enrol in upper secondary education are not covered here).

The table below clearly shows that the main reason for not completing their studies is that they were 'tired of studying'. This is particularly true amongst young men (49%) as compared to young women (32%). Long term physical or mental illness was also a major cause for women, who also cited not liking the class or school as a factor when other reasons applied to their final decision.

**Table 21 – Sweden: New upper secondary school starters in autumn 2000 who did not go on to complete their studies, by cause of dropout (2007)**

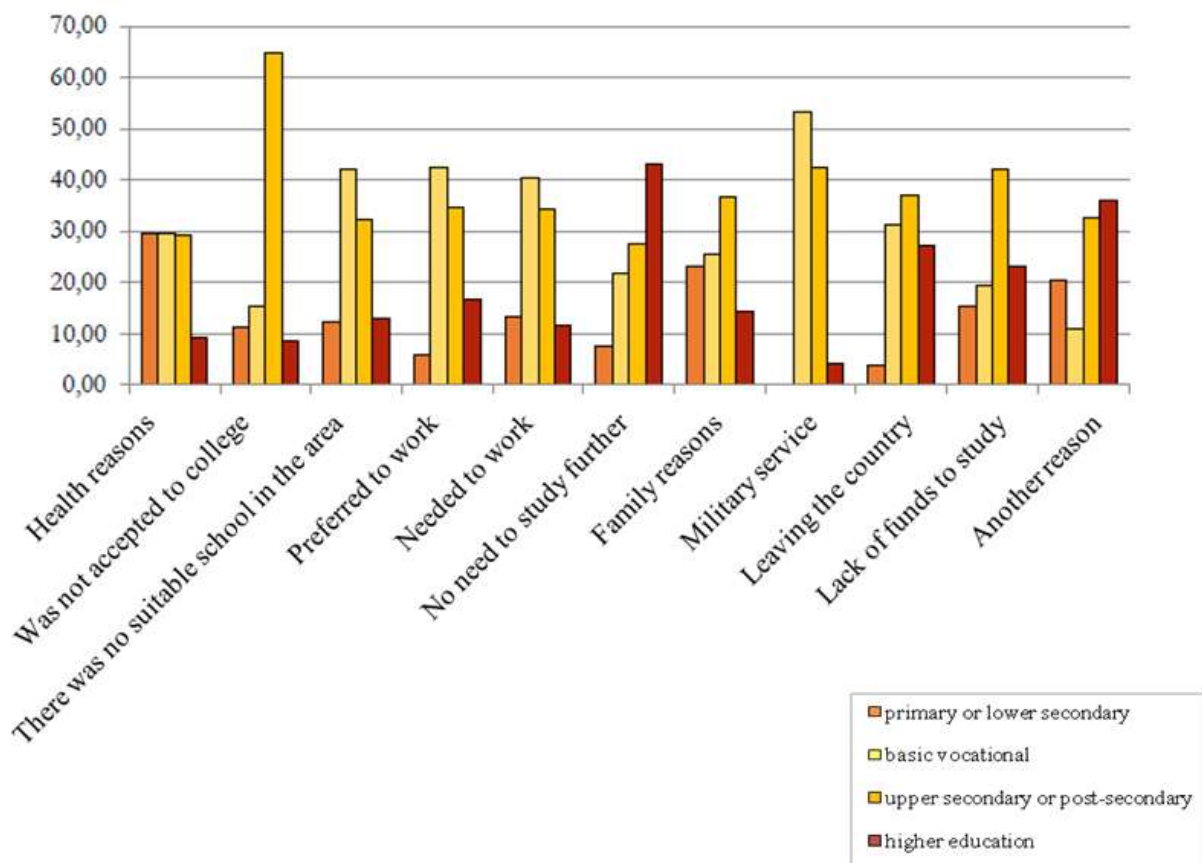
Reason	Main cause			When other reasons applied		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Tired of studying	32	49	41	50	62	57
Physically or mentally ill for a long time	17	9	13	18	10	14
Training had the wrong focus	10	9	9	19	15	17
Studies were too difficult	7	7	7	11	10	11
Did not like the class / school	6	5	6	20	12	15
Got a job	3	8	5	10	11	10
Did not receive the support I needed in school	6	3	4	14	7	10
Studies were too theoretical	0	3	2	5	6	6
Tuition fees were too high	3	1	2	7	2	4
To take an adult education course instead	2	1	1	3	1	2
Another reason	14	7	10	16	9	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>	<b>*</b>

\* Totals more than 100 percent as more than one reason may be given

Source: adapted from Statistics Sweden, *'Ungdomar utan fullföljd gymnasieutbildning'*, 2007

Similarly, statistical data collected in Poland also highlights the reasons for which young people decide not to continue their studies (Figure 14). Leaving school after primary or lower secondary education appears primarily to be due to health problems (31.8%) or for family reasons (23.3%), whilst a lack of funds is also a significant cause mentioned. Amongst those with basic vocational qualification (also classed as early school leavers) a much higher proportion of young people say they prefer to work, or they need to work, with a large number also citing enlisting in the military as a reason for discontinuing their studies. Additionally, almost half (42.3%) of those with basic vocational education decided to leave education because of a lack of suitable vocational educational provision in the area, which otherwise may have allowed them to continue their studies on to a higher level of vocational qualification.

**Figure 13 – Poland: Reasons for discontinuation of study, by highest level of attainment (2013)**



Source: adapted from Główny Urząd Statystyczny, 'Wybory ścieżki kształcenia a sytuacja zawodowa Polaków', 2013

### 2.6.3 Conclusion

Despite a considerable lack of international comparative data on students' future plans or aspirations whilst still in compulsory education or reasons for which early school leavers decided not to continue their studies, national or regional surveys of young people remain an important source of quantitative information, where variables are collected on the decision making motivations of students reaching the end of compulsory education and/or seeking to enter the labour market.

These surveys of young people can also elicit trends in terms of socio-demographic traits for a more nuanced insight into the plans and aspirations of different groups of youngsters from within the same national institutional framework. For example, clear differences can be seen according to nationality (native or of migrant background) in Spain (Table 19), gender in Sweden (Table 20) or the level of education at which one decides to finish studying in Poland (Figure 12). Cross-national comparative data, as collected through the RESL.eu project, will provide insights as to whether these national findings are common to students across the EU or more specific to the national context of individual member states.

## Conclusions

There exists a large amount of statistical data on young people and educational issues at an international, European, national and local level across the participant countries in the RESL.eu project. However, the information available in each country is considerably different in terms of variables collected and methodologies used, which renders it difficult to compare effectively cross-nationally.

The trends revealed in this data appear to show that, although rates of early school leaving vary substantially throughout the EU, it is a phenomenon that primarily affects young men. In some states, it is associated with ethnic minority groups, students participating in vocational education and young people living in less economically-prosperous regions of the country. Levels of educational attainment in EU member states appears also to display a significant gender disparity, with young men disproportionately less likely to achieve at least upper secondary education. Additionally, there is a clear link between lower socioeconomic status and lower education attainment.

Youth unemployment and the widespread phenomenon of NEETs have clearly seen an increase since the economic crisis and the effects of the recession have been felt disproportionately by young people. Lack of work experience and low development of human capital on the one hand, and the demands of the labour markets, with lack of demand for unskilled labour and a preference for more flexible (and less secure) labour contracts on the other have contributed to this disproportionate effect and has exacerbated the economic prospects amongst this age group.

As previously stated, the educational situation of young people is context specific and national and cross-national data can belie dynamic processes that affect students within variable educational systems and economic structures. Overall it is possible to identify some broad geographical tendencies whereby some countries in the south of Europe are more likely to see higher rates of youth unemployment, early school leaving and NEETs, although with significant regional differences within countries, with regions performing significantly better than the national average, e.g. Basque Country and Aragon within Spain, or Flanders in Belgium.

Whilst most international comparative data focuses on factual information, such as enrolment figures, graduation rates and attainment levels, or levels of youth unemployment, NEET rates and economic figures, there is very little cross-national comparable data on variables relating to young people's attitudes to school or post-education plans.

The primary sources of data that collect information on students' motivations, aspiration and attitudes to school are national or local surveys, which are undertaken within the context of a specific educational system. Where comparable international data does exist, most notably from the OECD's PISA programme, statistical information is by no means comprehensive and potentially significant gaps are evident. The PISA programme's stated focus on student performance at school means that no variables are included, for example, on students' future intentions or planned school-to-work transitions. It is also a snapshot of the current school population and so, by surveying only those still in education, can only offer limited insights into Early School Leavers and their motivations for having left.

As has been shown in this paper, therefore, there remains great scope for collecting cross-national, comparable data in a systematic way. The empirical data collection involved in the RESL.eu project will fill identified gaps in existing quantitative data on student aspirations, attitudes and motivations, as well as gathering important information on family backgrounds, social capital social networks and access to resources.

The aim of the next phase of this work package is to assess the extent to which the trends revealed in the data here are consistent with the new empirical data collected from students in schools now, and – through a repeat survey in 2016 – assess wherever they find themselves in two years' time. In particular, the new data will be able to reveal whether young people are staying on in education for longer than they might previously have considered as a strategy against persistent adverse labour market conditions; whether at a time of relatively high youth unemployment, attainment of upper secondary education suffices to ensure secure employment contracts for young people; the extent to which students who identify themselves as 'happy' or 'engaged' at school might still be at risk of ESL; and the effect that strong access to social and cultural capital has on students to increase aspirations, positive attitudes to learning and to lower the risk of ESL.

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## Appendix 2

### List of Data Sources:

### ***United Kingdom (England)***

Annual Population Survey	The Annual Population Survey (APS) is a major survey series, which aims to provide data that can produce reliable estimates at local authority level. Key topics covered in the survey include education, employment, health and ethnicity.	<a href="http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/series/?sn=200002">http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/series/?sn=200002</a>
British Cohort Study (1970)	The 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) began as the British Births Survey (BBS), collecting data on the births and families of just under 17,200 babies born in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in a particular week in April 1970. The BBS has been followed by seven attempts to trace all members of the birth cohort. At each sweep, different sources and methods were used to gather information on the cohort members. With each successive attempt, the scope of BCS70 has broadened from a strictly medical focus at birth, to encompass physical and educational development at the age of 5, physical, educational and social development at the ages of 10 and 16, and physical, educational, social and economic development at 26 years and beyond.	<a href="http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/page.aspx?&amp;sitesectionid=795&amp;sitesectiontitle=Welcome+to+the+1970+British+Cohort+Study+%28BCS70%29">http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/page.aspx?&amp;sitesectionid=795&amp;sitesectiontitle=Welcome+to+the+1970+British+Cohort+Study+%28BCS70%29</a>
British Household Panel Study	The main objective of the BHPS is to further understanding of social and economic change at the individual and household level in the UK, and to identify, model and forecast such changes and their causes and consequences in relation to a range of socio-economic variables. It is conducted as a longitudinal study, where each adult member (aged 16 years and over) of a sampled household is interviewed annually.	<a href="http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/access/bhps/L33196.asp">http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/access/bhps/L33196.asp</a>
Effective Pre-School, Primary and Secondary Education Study	The EPPSE project is a large-scale, longitudinal study of the progress and development of children from pre-school to post-compulsory education. It considers the aspects of pre-school provision which have a positive impact on children's attainment, progress and development.	<a href="http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/153.html">http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/153.html</a>

Family and Children's Study	The main objectives of the FACS survey are to: evaluate the effectiveness of the Government's work incentive measures in terms of helping people into work, improving living standards and improving child outcomes; compare the living standards and outcomes for children and for families across the income distribution; compare changes in the above across the waves since 1999. FACS also aims to provide commentary on longer-term objectives such as the Government's Public Service Agreement to eradicate child poverty within a generation.	<a href="http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=4427&amp;type=Data%20catalogue">http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=4427&amp;type=Data%20catalogue</a>
Individualised Learner Record	The Individualised Learner Record (ILR) is a dataset that collects information on learners and their learning in the Further Education system in England. The Further Education system includes further education colleges, sixth form colleges, independent learning providers, former external institutions, local authorities and voluntary and community organisations.	<a href="http://www.adls.ac.uk/the-information-authority/individualised-learner-record/?detail">http://www.adls.ac.uk/the-information-authority/individualised-learner-record/?detail</a>
Longitudinal Study of Young People in England	The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE), is a major innovative panel study of young people. The study began in 2004 and is one of the main information sources for the formation and appraisal of policies relating to young people.	<a href="http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/access/lsype/L5545.asp">http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/access/lsype/L5545.asp</a>
Millennium Cohort Study	A renewed interest in child wellbeing in the late 1990s in the UK provided the context for the development of a new and distinctive child cohort study, after a gap of 30 years. The Millennium Cohort Study (MCS) was developed as a multidisciplinary survey which could capture the influence of early family context on child development and outcomes throughout childhood, into adolescence and subsequently through adulthood. The study's field of enquiry covers such diverse topics as parenting; child-care; school choice; child behaviour and cognitive development; child and parental health; parents' employment and education; income and poverty; housing, neighbourhood and residential mobility; and social capital and ethnicity.	<a href="http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/page.aspx?&amp;sitesectionid=851&amp;sitesectiontitle=Welcome+to+the+Millennium+Cohort+Study">http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/page.aspx?&amp;sitesectionid=851&amp;sitesectiontitle=Welcome+to+the+Millennium+Cohort+Study</a>

National Child Development Study	<p>The National Child Development Study (NCDS) is a continuing longitudinal study that seeks to follow the lives of all those living in Great Britain who were born in one particular week in 1958. The aim of the study is to improve understanding of the factors affecting human development over the whole lifespan. The eighth sweep of NCDS was conducted in 2008-2009, when respondents were aged 50 years. The core aims of the NCDS8 were to update the life history information collected in previous studies and to collect new information to help understand the ageing process. Many of the questions in the NCDS8 follow-up had been asked in earlier waves of the NCDS and the BCS, which will allow for the making of comparisons both across the sweeps of NCDS and with the BCS cohort.</p>	<a href="http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/page.aspx?&amp;sitesectionid=724&amp;sitesectiontitle=Welcome+to+the+1958+National+Child+Development+Study">http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/page.aspx?&amp;sitesectionid=724&amp;sitesectiontitle=Welcome+to+the+1958+National+Child+Development+Study</a>
National Pupil Database	<p>The National Pupil Database (NPD) is one of the richest education datasets in the world, holding a wide range of information about students who attend schools and colleges in England. The NPD combines the examination results of pupils with information on pupil and school characteristics and is an amalgamation of a number of different datasets, including Key Stage attainment data and Schools Census data (formerly known as PLASC) which are linked using a unique identifier for each pupil. The NPD provides detailed information about children's education at different stages (pre-school, primary and secondary education and further education). The data held includes detailed information about pupils' test and exam results, prior attainment and progression at different key stages for all schools in the state sector in England. Attainment data is also held for pupils and students in non-maintained special schools, sixth-form and FE colleges and (where available) independent schools.</p>	<a href="http://nationalpupildatabase.wikispaces.com/">http://nationalpupildatabase.wikispaces.com/</a>
UK Census	<p>The census is the most complete source of information about the population that we have. Every effort is made to include everyone. It is the only survey which provides a detailed picture of the entire population, and is unique because it covers everyone at the same time and asks the same core questions everywhere. This makes it easy to compare different parts of the country.</p>	<a href="http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html">http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html</a>
Young People's Social Attitudes Survey	<p>The Young People's Social Attitudes Survey, 2003 (YPSA) is an offshoot of the British Social Attitudes Survey, 2003 (BSA) (held at the UK Data Archive (UKDA) under SN 5235). It was designed to explore the attitudes and values of children and young people and make comparisons with those held by adults in 2003 and with other young people interviewed on the 1998 and 1994 YPSA (held under SN 4231 and SN 3629 respectively). All young people aged 12-19 living in the households of BSA respondents were approached for interview.</p>	<a href="http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=5250&amp;type=Data%20catalogue">http://discover.ukdataservice.ac.uk/catalogue/?sn=5250&amp;type=Data%20catalogue</a>

Youth Cohort Study	The Youth Cohort Study (YCS) monitors the behaviour and decisions of representative samples of young people aged sixteen upwards as they make the transition from compulsory education to further or higher education, or to the labour market. It tries to identify and explain the factors which influence post-16 transitions.	<a href="http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/ycsTitles.asp">http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/ycsTitles.asp</a>
<b><u>Belgium (Flanders)</u></b>		
Getuigschriftendatabank van het Vlaams Departement Onderwijs	The Certificates Database includes for each school year all certificates for each grade (1st, 2nd and 3rd) awarded by the educational institutions on the level of secondary education in Flanders. These data contain cross-tabulations of the amount of certificates by grade, gender, birth year and study curriculum.	
Leerlingendatabank van het Vlaams Departement Onderwijs	The Pupil Database is a snapshot of the total pupil population in Flanders recorded at the 1st of February each school year. Every school has to inform the Department of Education on a wide range of questions at the pupil level. The Pupil Database contains the only census data that allows data analyses on a pupil level. Although some specific forms of education are excluded from this database, it has recently been supplemented by similar databases for these specific kinds of education by the Policy Research Centre for Educational and School Careers,	
Longitudinaal Onderzoek Secundair Onderwijs (LOSO)	The LOSO surveys followed pupils throughout secondary education. The objective of LOSO study was to describe and explain the study careers of pupils in Flemish secondary education. Pupils were questioned at least twice per school year and extensive additional surveys and other measurement tools targeting parents and school staff were administered.	<a href="https://ppw.kuleuven.be/o_en_o/COE/losodatabank">https://ppw.kuleuven.be/o_en_o/COE/losodatabank</a>
Longitudinaal Onderzoek Secundair Onderwijs Annex (LOSO Annex)	The LOSO Annex survey succeeded the LOSO surveys for those who graduated within the LOSO cohort and supplemented with the cohort pupils' classmates and those graduating one year later in the LOSO researched schools. In the LOSO Annex survey (once; 3,5 years after graduation), the post-secondary careers of LOSO respondents and an additional sample were studied. Transitions from secondary education to higher education and / or employment were therefore mapped.	<a href="https://ppw.kuleuven.be/o_en_o/COE/losodatabank">https://ppw.kuleuven.be/o_en_o/COE/losodatabank</a>



Oprit14 Databank	The BET YOU dataset covers a wide range of variables on pupils' background, school career, experiences and psychological traits. However the survey was administered once so it concerns a one-off cross-sectional measurement which has implications towards reporting about the causality of relations. Nonetheless, the pupils' school career can be retrospectively constructed based on the survey data.	<a href="http://www.oprit14.be">www.oprit14.be</a>
Schoolverlatersdatabank VDAB	The School Leavers database of the Flemish Employment Agency combines the database of persons who register at the employment agency for the first time, with data from the Department of Education and Syntra (apprenticeship contracts). This database therefore allows to follow all school leavers, including those who aren't registered at the Flemish Employment Agency, in their transition to the labour market.	<a href="http://www.vdab.be/trends/schoolverlaters.shtml">http://www.vdab.be/trends/schoolverlaters.shtml</a>
Studiegroep van ONderwijs naar ARbeidsmarkt (SONAR)	This longitudinal SONAR database was developed to extend the understanding of the way Flemish youth makes the transition from school to work. The following research questions were at the basis of the SONAR data collection: Which paths do young people follow in the transition from school to work?; What mechanisms sort young people between these tracks?; and what factors influence success or failure in this transition?	<a href="http://steunpuntssl.be/Onderzoek/Databanken#SONAR">http://steunpuntssl.be/Onderzoek/Databanken#SONAR</a>

## **Netherlands**

Basis Registratie Onderwijsnummer (BRON)	BRON contains (de-)registration records, examination and diploma records of all funded institution (by the Ministry of Education Culture and Science).	<a href="http://www.vsvverkenner.nl">www.vsvverkenner.nl</a>
Cohort Onderzoek OnderwijsLoopbanen (COOL 5-18) '07/'10	A large-scale longitudinal study that follows up the Secondary Education Student Cohort and has three measure moments. In the first measurement (2007-2008) pupils (and parents) in the 2nd, 5th and 8th grade (primary education) and students in the 11th grade (secondary education) are surveyed. In the second (2010-2011) and third (2013-2014) measurement the same pupils are surveyed but also students in the upper grades of secondary education. In each round about 50,000 pupils in primary education and about 20,000 students in secondary education participate. Plus 20,000 students in upper grade of secondary education in the second and third round.	

Data Louise Elffers	The aim of the data collection was to analyse the processes and the underlying mechanisms for drop out after the transition from pre-vocational education to senior vocational education. Data was collected in two urbanized school regions (Randstad and Brabant).	
JOB-monitor	Once in two years the Youth Organisation for Vocational Education conducts a monitor to survey how senior vocational education students evaluate their education. They survey is carried out by research institute ResearchNed. The aim of the monitor is to contribute to the improvement in the quality of vocational education.	<a href="http://jobmonitor2012.kiwi.qdelft.nl/">http://jobmonitor2012.kiwi.qdelft.nl/</a>
Terugkeerders	This study is a small survey among drop outs who have returned to the Dutch education system.	
Thuiszittersonderzoek	Every year about 2.500 truants (5 to 18 years old) miss school for at least a month without formal permission. This study aims to collect information about truants in different areas to provide insights about possible explanations. This information is collected through attendance officers and meant to inform attendance officers to improve their strategies in reducing truancy.	
Voortgezet Onderwijs Cohort Leerlingen (VOCL) '89/'93/'99	Three large-scale longitudinal studies the so-called Secondary Education Student Cohorts were conducted among students (and their parents) in secondary school. The educational careers of students were followed throughout secondary school starting in the first grade in either 1989, 1993 or 1999/~00. These studies were carried out in the Netherlands by Statistics Netherlands and the Groningen Institute for Educational Research (GION). The sample size differs between the three cohorts but all samples are representative for Dutch secondary education.	
VSV monitor	The present survey among unqualified school-leavers is part of the annual school-leaver surveys carried out by the Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA). For a number of sections of the questionnaires, the items for unqualified and qualified respondents are the same, allowing a comparison between the two groups for a number of key indicators. "Qualified" in this case refers to school-leavers who left school with a diploma, regardless whether this constituted a basic qualification or not.	

## **Spain (Catalonia)**

CIS - 2664 ENCUESTA SOCIOLÓGICA A HOGARES DE LA POBLACIÓN GITANA (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas)	The dataset is maintained by an academic and government consortium, the Institute of Infancy and Urban World (CIIMU)	<a href="http://www.cis.es/cis/opencm/ES/1_encuestas/estudios/ver.jsp?estudio=7820">http://www.cis.es/cis/opencm/ES/1_encuestas/estudios/ver.jsp?estudio=7820</a>
Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida	Statistics on Income and Living Conditions	<a href="ftp://www.ine.es/temas/ecv/datos_ecv08-11.zip">ftp://www.ine.es/temas/ecv/datos_ecv08-11.zip</a>
Encuesta de Transición Educativo-Formativa e Inserción Laboral (ETEFIL) 2005	The dataset is maintained by the Ministry of Education Culture and Sport. The data was collected yearly between 2001 and 2005	<a href="http://www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/mercado-laboral/transicion-educativo-formativo/encuesta-2005.html">http://www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/mercado-laboral/transicion-educativo-formativo/encuesta-2005.html</a>
Enseñanzas no universitarias. Alumnado matriculado.- MECD (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte)	The dataset is maintained by the Ministry of Education Culture and Sport	<a href="http://www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/no-universitaria/alumnado/matriculado.html">http://www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/no-universitaria/alumnado/matriculado.html</a>
Enseñanzas no universitarias. Alumnado. Resultados académicos - MECD (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte)	The dataset is maintained by the Ministry of Education Culture and Sport	<a href="http://www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/no-universitaria/alumnado/resultados.html">http://www.mecd.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/no-universitaria/alumnado/resultados.html</a>
EPA - Encuesta de Población Activa (metodología 2005)	Economically Active Population Survey	<a href="http://www.ine.es/jaxiBD/menu.do?L=0&amp;divi=EPA&amp;his=2&amp;type=db">http://www.ine.es/jaxiBD/menu.do?L=0&amp;divi=EPA&amp;his=2&amp;type=db</a>
EPA - Módulo año 2000. Transición de la educación al mercado laboral	Economically Active Population Survey - Module on Transition to the job market	<a href="http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&amp;path=/t22/e308/meto_05/modulo/2000/&amp;file=pcaxis">http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&amp;path=/t22/e308/meto_05/modulo/2000/&amp;file=pcaxis</a>

EPA - Módulo año 2009. Incorporación de los jóvenes al mercado laboral	Economically Active Population Survey - Module on Youth Entry into the Job Market	<a href="http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&amp;path=/t22/e308/meto_05/modulo/2009/&amp;file=pcaxis&amp;L=1">http://www.ine.es/jaxi/menu.do?type=pcaxis&amp;path=/t22/e308/meto_05/modulo/2009/&amp;file=pcaxis&amp;L=1</a>
Incorporación y trayectoria niñas gitanas en la E.S.O. (FSG 2006)	The dataset is maintained by an NGO called Fundación Secretariado Gitano	-
Panel de Famílies i Infància (CIIMU)	The data is maintained by an academic and government consortium, the Institute of Infancy and Urban World (CIIMU)	<a href="http://www.ciimu.org/webs/panel/marc1.htm">http://www.ciimu.org/webs/panel/marc1.htm</a>
Población Gitana y Empleo (Fundación Secretariado Gitano/EDIS 2005)	The dataset is maintained by an NGO called Fundación Secretariado Gitano	-
UNDP/World Bank/EC (FRA) regional Roma 2011 survey	The dataset is maintained by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights	<a href="http://europeandcis.undp.org/ourwork/roma/show/D69F01FE-F203-1EE9-B45121B12A557E1B#ROMAexplore">http://europeandcis.undp.org/ourwork/roma/show/D69F01FE-F203-1EE9-B45121B12A557E1B#ROMAexplore</a> ("Data coming soon")

## **Portugal**

Censos 2011	National Census for Portugal	
Estatísticas da Educação	The dataset collects data directly from schools, by a software specially designed to collect the informations to include in the dataset. The data (at least some of) are published yearly in a report named Statistics of Education published by GEPE (Bureau of Statistics and Education Planning); this bureau provides educational statistics to the National Institute of Statistics, which publishes some of the data collected by GEPE	

Inquérito à Educação e Formação de Adultos - IEFA

The survey aims to contribute to the consolidation of a European statistical information system in education and lifelong learning. The main theme of the survey is adult participation in education and lifelong learning: any type of learning activity, including informal learning/teaching activities and formal and non-formal education.

Inquérito ao Emprego 2011

ES aims to Provide an internationally comparable direct measure of infra-annual changes of employment and unemployment; assess, throughout the year, the volume of certain phenomena of the work market (employment, unemployment, hours worked, underemployment, work force available); provide annual structural data related to employment and unemployment, particularly regional unemployment rates; and create a database of micro-data, allowing analysis of patterns of behaviour and flows of skilled labour. It is directed at the definition of social and economic policy.

## **Poland**

BAEL- Badanie Aktywności Ekonomicznej Ludności

LFS is the main source of information on the size of the labour force (human capital) with a full characterization of basic demographic and social characteristics, spatial distribution, and the labour market status. It provides information on the size and structure of the population: the employed, the unemployed and the economically inactive, which is used to monitor the speed and direction of changes in the level of activity of the population. LFS is the primary source of data for structural indicators of the labour market, as well as for international comparisons.

[http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840\\_13729\\_PLK\\_HTML.htm](http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/5840_13729_PLK_HTML.htm)

Bank Danych Lokalnych

Local Data Bank is the information system for studying the differences in social, economic and environmental phenomena.

<http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/strona.html?name=indeks>

Czynniki chroniące i czynniki ryzyka związane z zachowaniami problemowymi

The database contains information on: family situation, adolescents' risk behaviors (aggression, violence, drug use, illegal acts, school problems), attitudes toward school and school education, protective factors, risk factors, support in difficult situations.

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warszawskich gimnazjalistów

Diagnoza społeczna. Warunki i jakość życia Polaków

The research takes into account all the significant aspects of the life of individual households and their members, both the economic (income, material wealth, savings and financing), and the not strictly economic (education, medical care, problem-solving, stress, psychological well-being, lifestyle, pathologies, engagement in the arts and cultural events, use of new communication technologies as well as and many others). The results of the Social Diagnosis reveal not only the current state of Polish society, but allow us to follow how it has changed over the last decade.

[www.diagnoza.com](http://www.diagnoza.com)

GUS - Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2011

NSP 2011 was carried out as a full-scale survey and as a sample survey. The full-scale survey involves population and housing, and is conducted with the use of administrative registers supplemented with a brief questionnaire to be filled in by each respondent. A sample survey is carried out on persons who permanently or temporarily reside in the territory of the Republic of Poland, and whose households have been sampled.

[http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/nsp\\_PLK\\_HTML.htm](http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/nsp_PLK_HTML.htm)

Kształcenie dorosłych

The sample survey "The Adult Education Survey" was carried out by the CSO in the first quarter of 2012. The main objective of the survey was to obtain information concerning the participation of persons aged 18-69 years in formal, non-formal and informal education, as well as information on their foreign language skills and computer literacy and the participation of the surveyed persons in cultural events and social life. The reference period of the survey was 12 months.

[http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/ED\\_ksztalcenie\\_doroslych\\_2011.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/ED_ksztalcenie_doroslych_2011.pdf)

Losy absolwentów publicznych szkół zawodowych w województwie podkarpackim

The dataset contains the following variables: knowledge of the labor market, reasons for choosing the school and the profession, the strengths and weaknesses of the selected school and career plans for the future (work, education, migration), the assessment of the professional exams and school final exam (matura), development activities (training, practice, tutoring, professional work).

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POLPAN - Polskie Badanie Panelowe,  
1988-2013

Description of the state of social structure and its change during the post-communist transformation. Main topics: employment; self-employment; Occupational history; Chances of success and sources of conflicts; Opinions about income; Opinions about society; Privatization and the market; Status evaluation and views on social issues; Friends; Family and household; Basic data; Government, political parties and power; Relationship of the individual and its fellows; Physical health/psychological items; Religion; Raven's Test

[www.polpan.org](http://www.polpan.org)

Polski Generalny Sondaż Społeczny

First, each edition of PGSS since 1992 contains topical modules from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), which is currently conducted in 40 countries. Certain ISSP modules are repeated every few years, which enables cross-country analysis over time. The integrated PGSS 1992-2002 data contain around 570 indicators from international ISSP surveys. Results from these surveys are distributed by ISS, as well as by international social science data archives. Second, on the basis of cooperation with the General Social Survey (GSS, National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago) and ALLBUS (Zentrum für Umfragen, Methoden und Analysen, Mannheim), the PGSS introduced a selected number of questions and indicators directly comparable with the results of GSS and ALLBUS surveys. Researchers interested in cross-country analysis will find in the PGSS documentation detailed information on cross-country comparable indicators. Third, since 1992 all PGSS materials and publications have been distributed in English. Thanks to that, the data and documentation are accessible to international scientists and are easier to redistribute through international data archives

<http://pgss.iss.uw.edu.pl/>

System Informacji Oświatowej (SIO)

Database SIO is a central dataset, led by the minister responsible for education, which consists of the following sets of data: 1) the collection of data on schools and educational institutions-Register of Schools and Educational Institutions, hereinafter referred to as "RSPO" 2 ) other data (than those covered by RSPO) on schools and educational institutions, hereinafter referred to as "datasets of schools and educational institutions", 3) datasets on other entities performing tasks in the field of education, hereinafter referred to as "data sets of individuals", 4) students dataset, 5) teachers datasets. SIO consists of local databases containing information for all schools and educational institutions in Poland. The data are input into the system by the heads of schools and other educational institutions or local government for people covered by education obligation who do not attend schools.

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## **Sweden**

Lisa databasen (SCB)

Longitudinal integration database for health insurance and labour market studies

Liu (9 årskurs)

Linköping University survey study on young people's access to social capital and its effect on educational performance

Ties (Sweden)

The Intergration of the European Second Generation survey

Ungdomar utan fullföljd gymnasieutbildning

Statistics Sweden's Young people without completed upper secondary education study